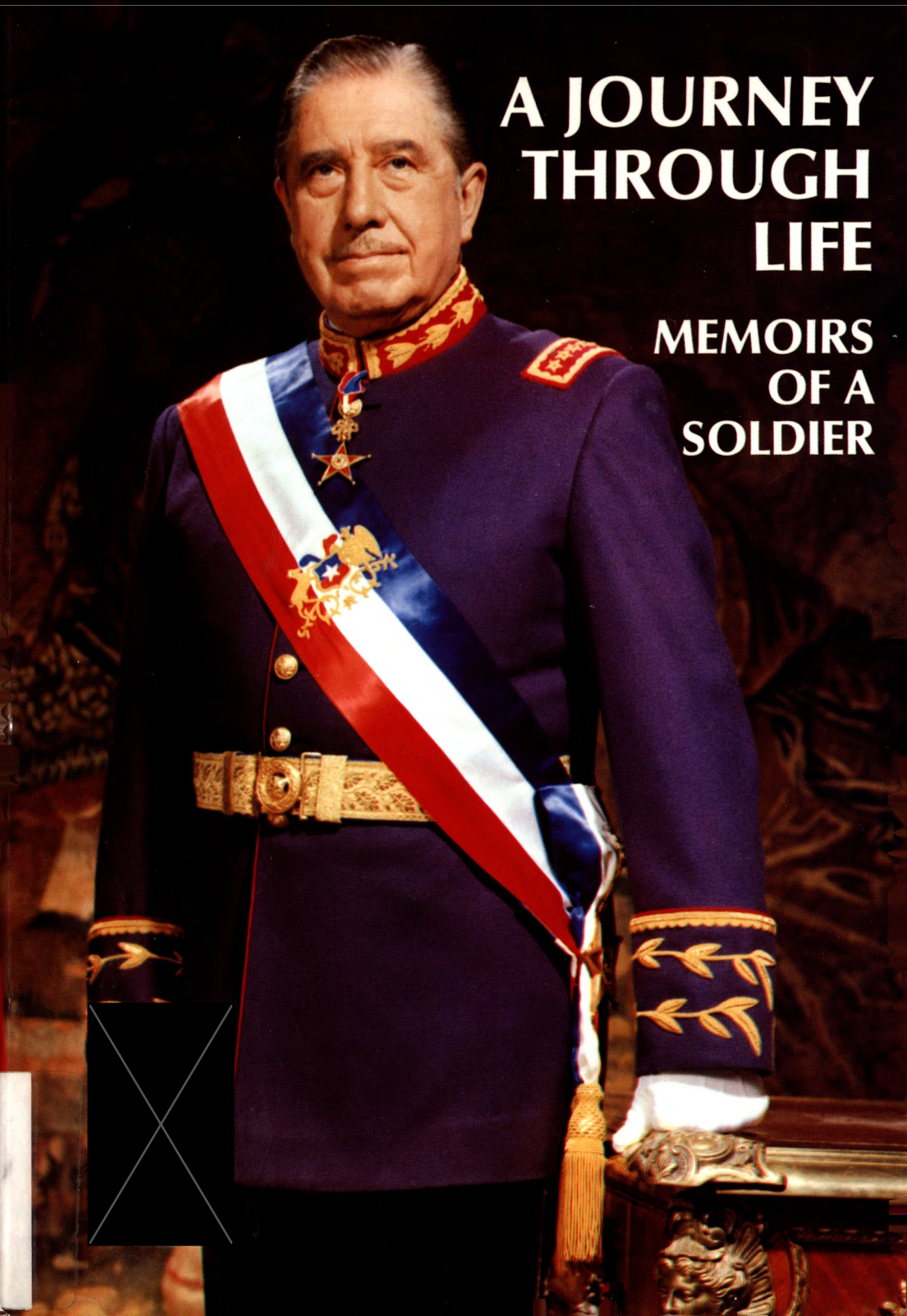
AUGUSTO PINOCHET UGARTE

A JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

MEMOIRS OF A SOLDIER



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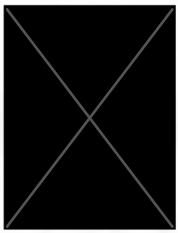
VOLUME 1



To my beloved wife and children

A.P.U.

Original title in Spanish

CAMINO RECORRIDO
Biografía de un soldado

Translated by
Mabel Nettle de Couyoumdjian

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Prologue

Very few ex presidents of Chile have written their memoirs, thus contributing with valuable material to the judgement of History. There are no presidential memoirs from the last century, and the gap has been filled by collections of letters which have fortunately been preserved. As regards this century, the "Memories of Government" of Arturo Alessandri and the "Memoirs" of Gabriel González certainly cover a fair period of time, but apart from these there is little else.

It is therefore a matter for celebration that General Augusto Pinochet should now publish his memoirs as a soldier and statesman. These are two different and fruitful careers which during the years from 1973 to 1990 are intertwined or merged, and which are all the more interesting because the events of the period have not yet been appraised in their full historical perspective.

This work will undoubtedly prove to be an invaluable contribution to the study of this crucial period in our history as a nation. This is not only because of the leading role played by the author, which allows him to judge the relative importance of the different events from a front-line position, in the moment they occurred. There is also the fact that, because the writer is a living archive, he can provide at every step the precise and pertinent facts from memory or documents.

It cannot be said that these memoirs are a speech in defense or in praise of the government headed by General Pinochet during more than sixteen years. Although this purpose may underlie the book (it inevitably does, and it could not be otherwise), the truth is that, as one reads on, the purpose of the author seems to be another one, less belligerent if you wish, but much more far-reaching, which is to provide the historians of the future who might want to write about these years with various and true facts, to inquire further, analyse and judge. That is, no doubt, the reason for the amount and variety of documentary references which may be found in the following pages. Besides this, there is the narration of the many personal experiences which in the first chapters, and on salient occasions later on, make the book eminently readable.

But although the writer has not wished to attempt a praise of his own work, or take the opportunity to challenge those who today try to distort it or even deny its evident importance, the different chapters contain the

facts which allow the truth to emerge and responsibilities to be assigned.

In the first place, the legitimate and patriotic motives for the military movement of September 11th 1973. It is clear that the Armed Forces and the Police Corps never plotted, in the sense implied by the word, to overthrow the established government. No, the real truth is that the government which collapsed destroyed itself, compounding daily its successive mistakes which divided the nation, dragged it down into an unprecedented chaos, and brought upon itself its rejection by the great majority of the people, to the extent that, to save the very essence of Chile, the Armed and the Police Forces found themselves forced to intervene. Testimonies from all sides abound, and no one can dispute this truth.

Next, it is also proved here that there was a will to carry out a work of restoration —or even of a founding nature— which if it extended in time, was due to the imperative need to rebuild a country which was completely eroded by years of ideologisms and demagoguery.

From the very moment they took power, the military authorities announced and guaranteed that the country would revert to a fully democratic system, a pledge that was periodically renewed in succesive and solemn declarations. The proof is evident: if the purpose and objective of the Armed and the Police Forces had been otherwise, the country would not have had the opportunity to decide its future at the polls, and thus the plebiscite of 1988 and the elections of 1989 would not have taken place. Even less would the authorities democratically elected in these elections be now in power.

Elements will be found here for a more balanced judgement on the subject of human rights in the future; a fairer judgement, less subject to the double standards which has been applied during all these years. On this subject, and regarding the period immediately after September 11th. 1973, there has been a tendency to forget about the presence in Chile of some ten to fifteen thousand guerrillas from every country, but principally from Latin America, who apart from having gone through a dangerously efficient military training, had at their disposal an arsenal of weapons which, after they were found and recovered by the authorities, proved sufficient to equip numerous Army batallions. The combats which took place after the military took power leave no doubt that, behind the slogan "no to a civil war", plans were already prepared to thwart or counterrest a possible action on the part of the Armed and Police Forces, and, thus, plunge the country in a bloodbath. Those who, in the face of irrefutable facts, insist on denying the above, are being naive, or showing bad faith or hypocrisy.

Another indisputable merit of the military government, and specifically of General Pinochet, is the application of economic measures which put Chile on the road to progress and development evidenced in every sector of the economy, after three decades of stagnation due to the inanities

of various socialist formulas. Before market economics achieved their present worldwide recognition and acceptance, Chile adopted this policy and stuck to it until attaining its leading position among the less developed countries, thanks to the unwavering support of President Pinochet. Neither the setbacks suffered while the systems was being consolidated, nor the warnings of the fainthearted, nor the admonitions of sensible men, nor the rantings of the opposition were sufficient to discourage the Government and make it change its course. This has been forgotten, but that iron will did not collapse on the advent of the oil crisis of 1975, nor during the world recession of 1982, and even less in the face of the violent protest encouraged by the opposition and extremists the following year. Without the political will shown and maintained by General Pinochet, none of the economic plans —justifiably praised today on all sides— could have been allowed to continue and bear their fruits.

On another plane, the continued visits of the author of these "Memoirs" to every part of the country, speak of the material work of the Government which he presided; a monumental work in housing, communications, transport, and public works which today the ungrateful try to minimize. The great majority who are not blinded by ideological pettiness readily admit that the years of military government changed the face of the country, modernizing, cleaning and beautifying it. In 1973 no one doubted that it would take at least ten years to rebuild the country from the ruins left by the Popular Unity. The truth is that within three years Chile was once again on its feet, marching boldly towards a better future. Those who today minimize the work done, fail to mention the devastation of the previous regime; they forget about the oil crisis and the low copper prices during most of this period, say nothing about the recession of 1982, nor about the conflict with Argentina which led us to the brink of war and which required not only a hefty dose of serenity and prudence but also enormous expenditure to ensure an adequate military defense. Needless to say, not a word about the earthquake of March 3rd. 1985 which caused losses amounting to over 750 million dollars of those days in housing plus almost 900 million in public works: roads, bridges, ports and public buildings.

Finally let us remember the concern about social issues which marked the government of General Pinochet. The poor, who had previously been used almost exclusively as a source of statistics, a demagogical ploy or as a hypocritical concern, became for the first time in Chilean history, an important national issue that had to be approached, studied and solved. It will be a matter of discussion to know whether Pinochet's government did or did not do all that was necessary in favour of the poorest members of society, but nobody will be able to deny that it was during his administration that the poor became one of the top national priorities, without regard for electoral calculations or political dividends.

Let us not continue. We could go on for ever enumerating the achievements of the military government and the important role General Augusto Pinochet played in it. But it is not the purpose of the prologue to take the place of the work which is introducing, Therefore, let us merely say that these "Memoirs", because of their content and their author, will become a fundamental and indispensable source for future historians of a period so important in the life of our country.

Rafael Valdivieso Ariztía.

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PART I
CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

I remember little about the early years of my life. Recalling them is like remembering a dream. Certain events exerted a strong influence and are engraved in my memory. How did they affect me? What remains of all those childhood incidents? I shall try and remember not only those pleasant events which made me happy or which were milestones in my life but also those obstacles in my way which, to the child which I then was, seemed like mountains, but which now with the distance of time are but molehills. All that I have written happened during those days, months and years now hidden in the shadows of the past.

CHAPTER I
In the Old Almendral

I was born in El Almendral, a quarter of Valparaíso, in a house on Colón Street or thereabouts, which my parents had rented when they married. I have no recollection of that house because, shortly after I was born we moved to the second floor of a building overlooking a square, Plaza O'Higgins. This is the first place of which I have any memory. When I walk past that place, a strange feeling comes upon me and memories flock to my mind. The house I was born in was later demolished to give way to progress, and a building was erected in line with the prosperity of Valparaíso at that time.

The house on Plaza O'Higgins was a corner building which also faced San Agustín –now Enrique Deformes Street. The bedroom of my parents overlooked the corner and had a view of the square, whereas ours, which was next to theirs, faced Deformes Street.

The main entrance to the house faced the square. The thick heavy twin doors were opened by the servants early in the morning, giving upon a hallway where another set of doors, with jealous glass at mid-height blocked the view of the interior.

The maid's duty was to open this door when the bell rang, and to do this, she would pull a string which opened the latch. This string, obviously, required frequent changes, and what was left of it, we used together with my brother, to play "coach". For this we would harness ourselves as follows: the one on the right would tie his right arm, the one on the left, his left

arm, and the coachman behind would "drive" us. We would usually upset a flowerpot or a vase, much to the annoyance of the maid who had to dry up and collect the bits and pieces behind us.

Upon reaching the second floor, a corridor led to the entrance of the house and to a staircase giving onto the third floor. Once inside, there was a passage parallel to Deformes Street which led to the different bedrooms. On its far side, it widened and a side door led to the servants' quarters. My mother used this wide part, fixing it up as a small sitting room which became a favourite place for meetings with family and friends.

The "salon" or drawing room, as was usual in those days, faced the main door. Next came the dining room, followed by the kitchen and service quarters.

I still keep in my mind that interior corridor which my brothers and I used as a racing track, where we played and ran making a noise which must have been unpleasant to our neighbours and other residents.

At the back of the house was a storeroom and another room for a servant. In the first of these my grandmother kept some large trunks with the belongings of her absent husband. Nobody paid any attention to them until my brother and I discovered that those big boxes contained lovely books on botany an zoology with coloured plates of animals and plants. I recall vividly the pleasure we had looking at the engravings that to us appeared to be handpainted. That is how I learnt about Darwins' theory; the corresponding pages showed pictures of monkey faces with their features very much like humans. I was deeply impressed. As we looked at them covertly, we did not dare ask questions on the subject to our elders. But later on, when I was already in school, we took one of those books to our teacher for her to explain. The Biology class on that occasion proved memorable.

In that house on Plaza O'Higgins, our family grew to two boys and two girls between the ages of seven and one.

Among my memories of the place I recall the time when my mother had to travel to Santiago taking us with her and leaving my father all alone in the house. One evening when my father was returning home after having dined with a friend, he noticed that the main door had one wing open and one closed. Instinctively, he pushed the door inwards, catching a criminal who was trapped between the door and the wall. Upon calling for help, a policeman on duty in the square came over, and between them they pinned down the assailant who, knife in hand, had been waiting for the master of the house to arrive. As a result of this episode, my father asked my mother to return as soon as possible given the danger of leaving the house alone.

Another time, on a Sunday, my parents were gathered in conversation with some friends, in that small sitting room of my mother that I mentioned, when a thief tried to break in. The people in the house heard the street

door open, and saw a man poke his head and look around; seeing no one, he set to work immediately, putting in a sack some small ornaments and bibelots which my mother had there. He was so engrossed in his task that he did not hear those approaching him. When he realised that he was surrounded, he flung the sack away and ran to the stairs. Only one of the guests, Mr Araya, had the presence of mind to give him a good kick that sent him down the stairs. But on reaching the ground floor, the thief quickly opened the glass door and ran into the street out of sight. We heard the comments from our bedroom. We would have liked to participate but it was not possible.

When I recall these years, many memories come to mind, as if I were looking at an old picture album with many gaps and with some of the dates mixed up. I will try to relate those events which stand out in the daily life of my childhood, even though they did not bring about any significant change in my life, with the exception of the coach accident.

My Ancestors

Who were my ancestors? I found out about them over the years, in adulthood. What I considered my family were my parents and sibling, and two sets of relations, one of them through my maternal grandfather and the other through my grandmother Inés Rosa. On my father's side, I knew his sisters Rita and Genoveva and later I met his brothers who lived in Cauquenes. My parents showed no interest in telling us about our relatives, and it did not cross our minds to ask about them.

As a result of some informations which I collected later, I found out that my father, Augusto Pinochet Vera, was the seventh generation through direct male line of the family founder, and that he, like his paternal forefathers, had been born on the coast of Chanco. He was born on April 16th 1891 and, according to the parish certificate, was christened in the Church of San Ambrosio on May 17th of that year by Father Domingo Albornoz, the priest of that parish. The document also records that his godparents were his uncle José Ignacio Pinochet Letelier and his first wife (he became a widower), Margarita Zambrano Pinochet.

He began his studies in the local school in Chanco and continued afterwards at the High School at Cauquenes where he remained until he moved to Valparaíso.

It would appear that, due to the death of my grandfather in the early years of the century, my father while still very young, left the lands of Maule where his forefathers had lived since the family founder, don Guillermo, a Frenchman, settled there. He moved from Cauquenes to Valparaíso with his mother, Rita Vera Muñoz, who, upon the death of her husband, had decided to go and lived there. His new residence would be in Valparaíso where he remained for the rest of his life.

I have researched into the activities of my father upon his arrival at the port city of Valparaíso, and have found out that, at first, he had a very hard time. When he was only fourteen years old he had to work as an errand-boy for Williamson, Balfour & Co., and continue his studies in the evening. The early economic hardships were only alleviated when one of his sisters who was a teacher, was appointed headmistress of a school in Las Zorras hill, and as such was entitled to a house.

My grandmother Rita and my father went to live there. I have a vivid recollection of her, for we used to visit her often in later years, and many times we would stay in my aunt's house during the day and leave for home just before dinner.

The residence of the headmistress was on a second story, and one of the bedrooms was occupied by my grandmother Rita who was confined to her bed. I never saw her up and about, and when I approached the bed to greet her she would fondle my hair, look at me with her deep dark eyes and simply say "my child".

After two years in Valparaíso my father changed jobs and took employment with a firm of customs agents, a work which he liked. He worked so hard that in a short time he was one of the principal employees in the firm. A friend of the family somewhat older than my father, a man by the name of Contreras, told us that when he started working the young Augusto was often congratulated by his superiors who praised his diligence in the preparation and handling of the documents required for the despatch of imported goods through customs.

Among the activities of my father during this period was his work as a volunteer with the Tenth Fire Company of Valparaíso, today the "Eduardo Farley" Company, where he later became councillor. There he was able to show his spirit of service to the community. During a speech at his funeral the representative of the Tenth Fire Company mentioned that he had received among other distinctions, the Medal of Merit for his bravery during the fire at Pasaje Ross when he saved three lives. He had never told us anything about this, and had never mentioned this award.

When he was eighteen years old my father was called up for military service with the N° 2 Maipo Infantry Regiment where he stayed through the legal period of instruction until 1912. Afterwars he returned to his previous job with the firm of Customs Agents, since, in accordance with the law, his employers had kept his post open for him while he did his military training.

While in military service he had come of age, and during one of his leaves, had met Avelina Ugarte Martínez whom after two years of courting, he married on October 20th 1914.

Later on in life, when I became President of the Republic, parish priests of old churches through which my ancestors had passed and scho-

lars have discovered the ascendants of both by parents. According to these records, my father was a direct descendant of Guillaume de Pinochet, born in Saint-Malô, who came to Chile in the XVIII century as a merchant. From the facts established by Jorge Valladares Campos, it is possible to set out the intervening generations between don Guillermo and my father, as follows:

1.– Guillermo Pinochet born in the kingdom of France and resident in Chile. Married to Ursula de la Vega y Montero in Concepción.

2.– One of the children of this marriage, Anselmo Pinochet de la Vega, born in Chanco, married Teresa Bravo de Villalba y Opazo on October 15th 1761 in Cauquenes.

3.– Among the children of the above we have Alejandro Pinochet y Bravo de Villalba, also born in Cauquenes, married to María Antonia de Urrutia-Avellaneda Villagra.

4.– All the various children of this marriage were born in Chanco. One of them, José María Pinochet y Urrutia-Avellaneda, married Josefa Prudencia Letelier Verdugo, also native of Chanco.

5.– Son of the above was Manuel Tomás Pinochet Letelier, married to María Josefa Letelier Muñoz, both born in Chanco.

6.– One of their offspring was Manuel Tomás Pinochet Letelier, who married María Rita Vera Muñoz, my paternal grandparents.

7.– Son of the above was my father, Augusto Pinochet Vera, born in Chanco on April 16th 1891, the youngest of five children, who in 1914 married Avelina Ugarte Martínez of Santiago.

During the first years of their marriage, my parents lived away from their family. That is why I only knew two aunts on my father's side, Rita an Genoveva. Later on, when my father had to go to Cauquenes on account of the distribution of the estate of my grandfather Manuel Tomás, which had not been done till then, I was able to meet various uncles; some of them I never saw again due to the distance between Valparaíso and Chanco and the lack of transport in those times. These uncles were, in order of age:

1.– Manuel Tomás Pinochet Vera, who was given his father's name;

2.– José Miguel Pinochet Vera, named after his paternal grandfather;

3.– Ramón Pinochet Vera, whose features I can still remember, for he became fond of me, and taught me to ride, but as I was still very young he would seat me in the cantle of the saddle and in this way we would take long rides in search of hazelnuts.

My mother, Avelina Ugarte Martínez, was born in Santiago. She was the daughter of Arturo Ugarte Valenzuela and Inés Rosa Martínez Bravo. When her father died she was nine years old, and was sent as a boarder to a nun's school where she remained until she finished her education. Having completed her studies, she went to live with her mother in the

Quinta Ross, a villa in Valparaíso, where her stepfather, a skilled floriculturist, worked. The villa was situated in the upper part of Las Zorras hill, and here she met my father, with whom she later got engaged.

According to the information provided by Jorge Valladares Campos, I discovered that her family had first set roots in our country in the early years of the seventeenth century. She descended from many illustrious conquistadors of Chile, whose traits were reflected in various gestures towards her children. Her paternal grandparents were Melitón Ugarte y Guzmán and Benigna Valenzuela y Concha, who formed part of nineteenth– century Chilean society in the region between San Fernando and Paredones.

Don Melitón was one of nine children of José Alejo Ugarte y Arriagada, a resident of Pumanque, near Vichuquén, who married Carmen Guzmán y Urzúa. She was the daughter of captain Andrés Guzmán y Ureta and Ana Josefa Ureta y Valenzuela, married in Paredones in 1795. Of the last named, Andrés was the son of captain Manuel de Guzmán y Labra and Paula de Ureta y Valenzuela. This surname is repeated in several generations; he was the paternal grandson of maestre de campo –chief field officer– Martín Núñez de Guzmán y Vásquez de Arenas, married to María de Labra y Roa born in Chimbarongo, and maternal grandchild of maestre de campo Pedro de Ureta y Prado and Francisca Javiera de Valenzuela y Ruiz de Peralta. These names form part of the social roots of Chile.

I often heard my mother talk about her maternal grandfather, Esteban Martínez, landowner in the area of Talagante who, when his daughter was left a widow, took the place of my mother's father.

My parents

The Pinochet-Ugarte couple married in the parish church of Nuestra Señora de Andacollo in Valparaíso, on October 24th 1914. They were a well-matched couple and we never saw or heard any unpleasantness between them. When they celebrated their silver wedding anniversary we shared the obvious happiness of our parents. My father died in Arica in October 1944, due to a misdiagnosed case of poisoning, and my mother survived him until April 12th 1986, when she died surrounded by the love of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

My parents married at the beginning of the First World War, an event that would later affect our immediate family. The outbreak of the war brought about a serious economic crisis. As a result of the contraction of the import trade, on which my father's work depended, the newly-married couple was hard hit, and the family was forced to reduce expenses.

It was in these straightened circumstances, that I came into the world on November 25th 1915, in a house near Colón Street in the city of Valparaíso. As the first-born, my father took special care to teach me and

humor me. I never received severe punishment from him nor a harsh word; on the contrary, he was always my best friend and a wise counsellor. His teachings always left in me a pleasant sensation, and his practical lessons on life are still alive in my heart. I often wished I had him near me to receive his advice, but life is a river which flows past leaving behind only the dampness in the earth.

Childhood in Valparaíso

I spent a happy childhood in Valparaíso. It was a beautiful place, full of contrasts. It had a special charm that made you feel proud to be a "porteño", and to live in Valparaíso.

The area round the Customs House and the port was the redlight district, quiet during daytime and a volcano at night. Sailors, longshoremen and stevedores drank to excess in the various bars. Their riotous behaviour led to street fights in the dark, beneath the pale light from the lamposts or under the garish-colored lights from the brothels.

The quieter parts of town were El Almendral and the city center. I still remember my walks along Pedro Montt Avenue, Argentina Avenue, Santa Elena and Las Zorras. I remember Playa Ancha hill, whose denizens referred to it as the Republic of Playa Ancha, and Cerro Alegre, where most of the foreigners –English, German and French – lived.

Plaza Victoria, the square in the heart of the city, was the place of recreation and walks for the youngsters of the time. On certain days the bands of the Maipo Regiment and the Navy took turns in playing there while the teenagers and children strolled around the eastern side of the square. During those walks the youngsters would flirt with the girls. Many acquaintances started in that square, later led to engagements.

The railway station, an old building, was situated facing the present one on the opposite corner. According to my grandmother, it was also known as "Victory Station" and the older residents used to say that the troops departing for the north during the War of the Pacific had started their journey from there. That is why the place was also known as "The Station of the Sailors". I remember that there was a great debate when it was pulled down: some were in favour, whereas others objected to a local landmark being torn down; however the march of progress does not always respect historical relics.

On Sunday mornings, after attending mass with my parents and my brother, we would leave my mother at home and would take a stroll about town with my father. I was still very young when I was able to see how they moved the railway line from Avenida Errázuriz nearer to the sea, for which they occupied the old quay filling the land with debris. At the same time, work was started in remodelling the avenue where the tracks had

previously run, one of the public works ordered by Lautaro Rosas, the Mayor of Valparaíso.

During those Sunday walks we would also go and see the construction of the new quays, opposite the Monument to the Heroes of Iquique, which work was completed in 1924.

The favorite resort of the residents of Valparaíso was "Las Torpederas" where there was a base for seaplanes. People would gather to watch the planes take off and fly. Fortunately we never had to regret an accident which could easily have happened.

Valparaíso was a peaceful city; only the port area was dangerous. The city then had a population of about 150 thousand inhabitants, hard-working and very enterprising. The "porteños" as we were called, felt very proud to be born in this part of Chile and we always considered ourselves superior to the people of Santiago. The city had various foreign communities, most of them quite closeknit; very few Chileans could become members of their clubs, which were open only to the scions of the respective nationals.

Since my early childhood we had Spanish friends who were at school with us and with whom we got on very well. As a result we were able to go to the parties for children organised by the Spanish Club of Valparaíso, and were often invited to have tea there in the afternoon.

French Influence

My mother used to tell me that on the death of her father, my grandfather Arturo, my grandmother then married a Frenchman, Francisco Valette. He was also a widower, native of Tours, who years before had been engaged in France by the Chilean Government to teach floriculture at the agricultural college in the Quinta Normal.

Francisco Valette had previously married a Chilean lady with whom he had two children: a boy named Ernesto who died very young and a daughter, Hortensia who, when she remained alone in life, entered a convent of nuns from which she later left. It was then that I met her. She was a very kind woman, and was very affectionate with all of us, then children. She renewed her teaching degree and worked as a teacher. Afterwards I lost track of her. Many times I wanted to see her, but I had no news of her until 1987, when I found out that she had been headmistress of a private school and had since died.

This step-grandfather left unforgettable and pleasant memories. He treated me as his own grandchild, talked to me in French, and when we would go and spend the summer at his house in Curimón, we would sit in a verandah and he would tell us stories which I loved to hear; his war years and the campaigns of Napoleón, about whom I learnt more than I

then knew about O'Higgins. We often took long walks in the evening, during which we would talk about historical events in Europe, the gallant feats during the war in the trenches, the valor of Napoleon's troops. He was a very cultured person, and beneath his stern features hid a very kindly man.

When grandfather went to war

I was christened when I was a few months old. My godparents were my grandmother and her husband, Francisco. As the first child, my parents and grandparents decided to name me Augusto, like my father. Shortly after my baptism, my grandfather disappeared from the house. I was then eight months old, so his disappearance must have taken place in July 1916.

Years later I asked my father why my grandfather had taken such a step. He replied that he had decided to go to France, his fatherland, upon receiving news of the war. He told the story as follows: "My father-in-law went to the office where I worked, and told me that he wished to speak to me privately. We went to a tearoom nearby and there he informed me that he would go to Europe to fight for France". My father added that he tried to dissuade him by every means, but that he had firmly resolved to leave. He also asked him to keep the news secret until he had departed, and to take good care of my grandmother. On the other hand, my grandfather had told doña Inés Rosa that "he would be absent for some time, because he had to travel South on business".

Thus my grandfather vanished from the family scene, and only afterwards, when he was already in France, did he write to his wife telling her of his decision and informing of his whereabouts. I can well imagine my grandmother's distress. At first she continued to live in her house in Independencia Street, but her sorrow must have affected her so much that she later came to live with us, without closing up her house. But, being a woman of strong character and personality she was able to withstand and overcome her grief. Life had been harsh with her. As the eldest child, she had to take over the running of her parent's house when she was a young girl, because her mother fell seriously ill, and was laid in bed for many years until her death.

Tantrums

My grandmother was very fond of my brother Gerardo and me, a feeling which we naturally reciprocated. At the time we were her only two grandchildren. I remember how we used to go into town with her and how she would always try to please us when we asked for something. As a result we would ask for whatever we wanted, and if she refused we threw a tantrum.

One day, however, I went out with my mother and I asked for something, I cannot remember what. As she did not grant my wish, I threw a tantrum as usual, which my mother at first ignored. A few blocks further, on Condell Street, my pressure had so increased that people turned round to look at the show. Suddenly my mother held me by the arm and took me under a doorway opposite the Commercial Institute and spanked me four or five times which made me stunned and silent. She then said: "If you keep on crying I will pull your pants down and you will get it right here in the street". Swollen with crying, I stopped and never again asked anything either from my mother or from my grandmother.

My grandmother endured stoically her grief for her absent husband, maintaining a dignified attitude. In 1919 she went back to live in her house and rented part of it to an elderly couple to help defray her expenses.

My First Movie

Some memories are deeply engraved in my mind, such as my first visit to the cinema together with my mother.

There was a cinema across Plaza O'Higgins which was later demolished and on the site of which now stands the Velarde Cinema.

I had never been to a cinema before. Everything went smoothly until the movie started a silent film. I was sitting next to my mother when a shooting scene took place accompanied by the vibrant music from the piano; I saw some of the actors fall wounded or dead and my shock was such that I started to scream, alarming the audience. Things became worse when a train rushed towards us from the screen. I tried to hide under my seat, screaming in terror to the point where the lights came on, and my mother had to take me out quickly, because the only thing I wanted was to flee from that chamber of torture. My mother told me later that the manager of the theater had asked her not to bring me any more as I was too nervous and unappreciative of the cinematographic arts.

Another occasion, I remember when our maid took us to the fun fair which had been set up on Argentina Avenue. We enjoyed the seesaw, but when the maid decided to take us on the ferris-wheel, and we took our places, my brother and I exchanged looks of fear, which increased as the wheel began to turn. First we shouted, then we screamed and ended by howling in such a way that the wheel was stopped; Nora got her money back and was asked not to bring us ever again. That was the end of our first experience with that kind of games.

Grandfather returns home

My grandfather Francisco returned home in 1921. He brought presents for all of us, especially for my grandmother. However, she refused to take

him back and it was only after some time that she readmitted him into the house. When the family came to Valparaíso, the talk at table centered exclusively on my grandparents' marriage. My parents exerted all their influence to obtain forgiveness for my grandfather Francisco.

Years later I learnt that the older generation used to say that my grandfather had been wounded in the war and that he still needed special care before his complete recovery; nevertheless I never heard him complain or knew of any pain of his.

At that age I was deeply impressed by the way my grandmother Inés Rosa used to rebuke my grandfather; today, as a grownup man, I can understand it better. But in those years these squabbles used to upset me and caused me great pain.

At about that time my parents' fourth child was born. She was given the name of Inés in honor of my grandmother Inés Rosa, and we in turn, called her "Granny". Her arrival did much to improve relations between my grandparents, who made her their favorite.

Our country was then governed by President Juan Luis Sanfuentes (1915-1920), about whom I heard very favourable comments from my father, for having kept Chile out of the First World War in spite of the pressure from our major trading partners, England, the United States and France. The decrease in trade brought about unemployment in the nitrate companies of northern Chile, and it became common to see men begging in the streets, a sight which impressed us children very much.

In those years we were still living the consequences of the Civil War of 1891, with a "parliamentary" system which caused much harm to Chile. However, during the Sanfuentes administration many schools were built and important social laws were enacted, even though there was continuous political agitation. It was in this climate that Arturo Alessandri began to make himself known, having obtained in 1915 a seat in the Senate for the province of Tarapacá.

During those days in 1920 there were disturbances in Valparaíso and I often remember my grandmother taking us quickly home, before things got out of hand. Those were turbulent years, and it seemed that the seeds of revolution were ready to sprout among the people in the area of the Customs House.

The health of my paternal grandmother deteriorated suddenly, and my father would stay until late at the house of my Aunt Rita to keep his mother company. One morning he came back before the usual time and we could hear him sobbing together with my mother in their room when he told her that grandmother had died. As children we were not fully conscious of what had happened, but we understood how this loss had affected my father.

The death of my paternal grandmother moved me deeply. The behaviour of my father increased the pain. I mourned her loss alone, and for a long time I remembered intensely those sad moments.

My first day at school

One of my childhood memories which comes to mind very vividly is my first day at School. My maternal grandmother believed that her first grandchild should be an infant prodigy and wanted me to learn to read before I was four years old. Therefore, she sent me to a nursery school in our neighbourhood.

On my first day at school I cried a lot, in spite of the kindness of the teacher, an elderly woman. I was very scared and my fright increased when I noticed that the old lady, for some reason or other, taught her pupils from her bed. I remembered a story which our nanny used to tell us about a wolf dressed up as an old lady who would fatten children before eating them, and I was even more impressed when she offered us candies. Just imagine what I felt when finding myself in a similar situation to the one in the story; according to the same, we could have been the victims of the teacher's "hunger". I did not wait long, and at the first opportunity I ran away to my house which was two blocks away. My sudden return caused astonishment and then laughter when, sobbing, I told my parents of my fears.

There is another anecdote about the time I gave away my father's razor strop. On two or three occasions, he had threatened to punish me with it if I did not behave. Therefore, one day when we went with the maid to the square in front of the house, I swiped the strop and took it with me to the square where I gave it to a coachman whom I had befriended. Next morning there was a big uproar at home when my father could not find his strop. The maid must have told him what had happened, because he did not scold me or say a word, but he never threatened to belt me again.

My initiation as a fireman

As I mentioned before, my father was a fireman, and for rescue exercises he would allow the use of one of the balconies in our dining room facing Enrique Deformes street. My brother and I used to watch with curiosity these exercises during which each fireman would jump out onto a sheet held by the others. Curiosity gave way to emulation, and I pestered the fireman in charge until he allowed me to jump. My leap was spectacular. When I was about to jump, the distance appeared to grow and the sheet seemed to shrink, but I had decided to go ahead: I jumped and fell on the

canvas. The blow was quite hard but I said nothing; I did not rub my behind which had received the impact nor did I show signs of pain while the firemen congratulated me on my bravery. However I did not ask to repeat the exercise.

I have an accident

The days went by with monotonous regularity. We would go to the Plaza O'Higgins every morning while the house was being cleaned. As we lived opposite the square and the girl who looked after us was very responsible, there was no danger. However, one day I suddenly let go of her hand and ran towards home crossing the street just when a coach was passing. One of the wheels of the vehicle passed over my left knee. The accident caused great commotion, and I was immediately taken to the nearby San Agustín Hospital, later Deformes Hospital. I was examined and the doctors decided there was nothing to worry about, only some bruises and scratches on my leg and knee, and was sent home. Nevertheless, this accident had repercussions two years later, when I almost lost my left leg.

When I was six years old, I began to feel strong pain in my left knee. My parents, very worried, took me to a doctor. After many exams, the doctors said that the only solution was to amputate my leg above the knee, because it was affected by tuberculosis and what was then known as "white tumor".

Looking back, I can imagine the pain of my parents upon receiving the news. In an attempt to cure me, my leg was put in a cast. I did not realise what this meant, but I felt very distressed because I would not be able to become a military man, which was my wish after hearing the heroic tales of my grandfather Francisco and my great-uncle Alejandro Ugarte. The acts of gallantry during the Great War witnessed and eloquently related by my godfather, made him a hero in my eyes, just as in the case of my great-uncle who talked about the battles in the Peruvian Sierra during the War of the Pacific. The prospect of having my leg amputated made me lose hope of becoming a soldier, putting an end to my military vocation. I remember my mother, spending long periods of time by my side, praying silently; her thoughts were reflected in her sad looks, and her eyes were often filled with tears. As a devout woman, she prayed to God for help and comfort in those difficult moments. One day she made up her mind and made a vow to Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro, promising her that if I recovered and did not lose my leg, and would then be able to go to the Military Academy, she would dress in brown for fifteen years, and that I would do the same for ten years if I was a civilian or for two if was a military man.

Several doctors concurred in the diagnosis that my leg should be amputated as soon as possible, but my mother refused, and kept her faith and hope in a normal recovery. The doctors, in turn, warned her of the dangers involved, stating that they would not be responsible if my leg was not amputated. In their opinion, the illness in my knee would spread to the whole of my body, leaving me with only two or three more years to live. However, my mother with great faith, kept praying to the Virgin for my health. This faith in the Mother of God was suddenly rewarded when it became known that a famous German doctor would be coming to Valparaíso. He was to arrive by ship from Germany to Buenos Aires offering his services in that city, and would then travel to Chile by train across the Andes. When the surgeon arrived at Valparaíso, appointments were made for those who had made prior requests and needed a specialised diagnosis. My mother made an appointment and took me to him. I can still see the man as in a dream, tall thin and dressed in black. He wore glasses and had a short beard. After examining me carefully, he showed annoyance and said that I had never had a "white tumor", but that it was only a hydroarthrosis which had become chronic as a result of some blow, badly cared for. His only prescription was that I should take sunbaths.

The treatment was to last two months, during which time I was to lay my knee in the sun for upto two hours a day, starting with fifteen minutes. This treatment led to my cure, for after thirty days the swelling in my knee disappeared, then my aches and pains stopped, and my knee never got swollen again. I was cured. The only trace left is that my left knee is slightly thicker than my right one. To carry out this cure I was sent to spend my holidays in Curimón with my grandparents, and there, under the care of my grandmother Inés Rosa, I submitted to this miraculous cure.

In the days of silent movies

It became a habit for us to go on Sundays to the matinee show. Our parents would send us to the cinema so that we should not bother the guests who used to come to our house to have tea. In those days, movies were silent and the sound was provided by a pianist who played while looking up to the screen so as to follow the action. There were parts when he speeded up the tempo and others where he slowed.

I had lost my fear of films thanks to a projector run by hand which my father had given me. One of those Sundays, my nanny Nora took me to the Colón theater, the old cinema which has since been refurbished, where she bought balcony seats; I suspect she did so instead of buying stalls tickets in order to save part of the money she had been given.

We climbed up the steps and took our places, with my sister sitting on Nora's lap. She then placed the milk bottles, which had been provided

to feed us, on the balcony rail. Being small we were restless, and after ten minutes we were about. With so much movement, nanny pulling us down and we running up and down the seats, we inadvertently spilled a bottle and the liquid started to fall on the stalls.

Soon loud screams were heard as the milk fell upon those sitting below. With great speed. Nora packed her bottles and hurriedly took us away before the lights came on.

We left very quickly and just in time for the police had already been called. But by the time they arrived we were already safe on the way to Plaza O'Higgins, where Nora made time. However, she was forced to spend her savings and buy us those famous wafer rolls sold there from a tall metal drum; the buyer would first spin a sort of roulette wheel on the head of the drum and win the number of wafers indicated by the arrow, all this for ten cents a throw.

We said nothing about what had happened at the cinema when we arrived home, because Nora made us responsible for all that had occurred and threatened to tell everything if we opened our mouths. The incident remained a secret.

Holidays

Upon the arrival of summer we would receive the visit of our relatives who would come and spend a few days with us. Their coming was a pleasure, for we would begin going to the beach. Normally, on the first day there would be a shortage of beds and we children had to spend the night in another room. My great concern was that my bed should not be assigned to one of the guests. I remember that during those days I would go to bed before six o'clock in the evening, tired from playing, and would fall asleep quickly and deeply. Even so, they would take my bed to give it to one of the guests, but this was solved the following day when we would go and stay at my grandmother's house.

Our guests would take us to the beach where I would wear a bathing suit with red and white stripes to go into the sea. I remember that my first baths when I was five years old, caused me some apprehension for I was very much afraid of the sea. The first time I was taken to the water I screamed and kicked, defending myself against everyone who tried to lead me into the sea.

We loved Sundays when my parents received their friends at teatime with sweets and cakes. These guests would normally stay on for dinner. After dinner we children would be sent to our bedrooms while they stayed up talking till late. Among the guests was a Peruvian gentleman by the name of Prado who, on one occasion, brought a box of chocolate cookies. We had watched where our mother had kept them, and the following day

we ate up the whole box, as a result of which we ended up with indigestion and high temperature. We were treated to the medicine of those days, an enema and then two or three days in bed. It was a punishment rather than a cure.

Later on our holidays changed, for we no longer stayed in Valparaíso, but would go and spend them at the house of my grandparents in Curimón, where they had bought or rented a property in 1922. Since then and until 1928, we would go there for our holidays, where my grandmother would collect various children of different relatives so that they should get away from the city and breathe the pure air of the country.

It was during one of these periods that I had to take the sunbaths for two months on account of my left knee, with such good results.

My brothers and I loved to spend our holidays there because we would be together with other children of our own age. Our grandparents were very affectionate not only with us but also with the other children.

Once a week we would have "pastel de choclos", fresh corn pie, prepared by Aurora the cook, under the personal directions of my grandmother. All of us took part in the preparation, bringing the fresh corn, grating it in order to obtain that sweet white paste which would slowly fill a big bowl. Then came the ceremony of mixing the ingredients and preparing the dish. We were all made to leave the kitchen, leaving only Aurora and my grandmother to make the famous pie. I must confess that we were always tempted to spy and see how it was made, but what usually happened was that as soon as we got out of the kitchen we would forget about the food and go off to run and play. Only around noon or half past twelve, when we smelled the sweet aroma coming from the oven, we would appear at table properly washed and combed as grandmother wanted, and wait for lunch, which she served from the head of the table upon the arrival of my grandfather Francisco. My grandmother Inés Rosa would have a large soup tureen placed before her and proceed to serve, as first course we would have cazuela, a stew of beef, lamb or chicken; then came the long-awaited pastel de choclos, eaten with relish. We waited until a second helping was offered before we had a filling, usually beans or chick peas, finishing with a fruit as dessert. Having finished lunch we asked leave to go and play, which grandmother granted. We only played until three o'clock, when grandmother would call us to study. Each of us had a copybook, a pencil and a reading book, called "The American Reader". A distant cousin who was training as a teacher, was in charge of these summer lessons. First we had reading and then dictation of single words. The one who did best had a recess immediately, which was practically after an hour's work. We did not like this system much, but we had to accept it if we wanted to be on good terms with grandmother Inés Rosa.

I think that grandmother decided upon these lessons in order to avoid the strong afternoon heat of Curimón. At the end of the week she would give a prize to the one with the least spelling mistakes. The prize consisted of blancmange candies. Nearly always we ended in a draw.

María's courtship

We had returned from our holidays and had moved house from Plaza O'Higgins to Brasil Avenue. My mother, as usual, sent us to the square, now to Plaza Victoria, with the new nanny María, who had replaced Nora. She was a very heroic woman, for we were very restless children and she had the hard job of keeping an eye on us and seeing that we did not go too far away. However, María attracted a police sergeant, who at first helped her to keep us under control, but then openly started to court "Mary", as we used to call her. In order to have enough time to talk with the lady he found a way through the wafer vendor who was hired to play with us and stuff us with wafers. The sergeant became a great man to us. On one occasion during the national holidays, the sergeant allowed us to go and play in the fair which had been set up. As we had no money, he offered to pay for the games, which we refused saying that our parents would not approve. He took out four pesos which we again refused, but while saying that "this wat not possible" my brother opened his pocket. The sergeant dropped the money in, telling him it was half for each. Off we went. At the end of the year the sergeant married María, and we were left without our nanny of whom we had grown very fond.

At the Seminary of San Rafael

I was still suffering from the ailment in my knee when I entered the "Sara Vives" School. I was not yet six. There I learnt to read. Because of my illness, during that year I was interned on various occasions in the German Hospital of Valparaíso, where I received the visit of my teachers, friends and family. I remember especially my teacher Miss Raquel who, during her visits, would teach me to read and write on a small slate. She had a strong vocation as a teacher and was much loved by her pupils.

It was while I was in that school, where I spent two years, that I invited the whole class and my teachers for my birthday. My mother had authorised me to bring about ten boys, but I thought I would invite over thirty. My mother had a hard time trying to satisfy the appetite of so many children; not an easy job with boys of that age. Grandmother said, smiling, that my friends were "a plague of locusts", for they left nothing on their plates. Although she made the remark in jest, I did not think it was funny to say that of my classmates, though I did not answer back out of respect for her as was my first impulse.

When I was eight years old I was sent as a boarder to the Seminary of San Rafael in the first grade. There I spent part of my school life adapting myself to a strict discipline. I was an average student, though I excelled in some subjects, such as history and religion, as recorded in "Lux", the school magazine of that year, where my name appears among those who received prizes.

My first "Baptism of Fire"

It was customary in the Seminary for us to have a recess of an hour after lunch or dinner, which we called the "long recess", during which we would gather in the shooting range. There we would often open a manhole cover leading to a sewer and go down one by one. After proceeding along the tunnel for about three blocks, we would reach the big drain on Argentina Avenue giving on to Colón Street, where we would emerge climbing up a fixed ladder. There used to be there a pastry shop where we would have a "berlín" –a sort of doughnut filled with peach jam– and drink "aloja de culén", a kind of mead no longer available. We repeated this adventure several times until one day we were discovered by Father Marambio who sent us back to the seminary where we were all punished, though we younger ones only received a reprimand.

At other times we would climb the hill facing the shooting range until we reached the wall giving on to the street on the hill. We would look for the place through which we could jump out and go to the store of a very charming young Italian woman who would sell us "Negro Bueno" cigarettes. On other occasions the meeting place was the marking booth of the targets, whence we would shoot at birds with our slings. More than once we were off target and broke a glass window instead of bringing down a bird.

One day when we had crossed the wall to go and buy cigarettes, my companions left me alone, whether by carelessness or in jest. The return to the main courtyard became a nightmare, because I had to cross the shooting range while there was a practice going on. The shots passed above the road I had to take, so that I was forced to drag myself along the ground for about a hundred meters, which seemed to me like a hundred kilometers. I went along so close to the ground that nobody noticed my movements. When I got to the main courtyard, Father Pedro del Río, reprimanded me, for I was all dirty and my shoes were frayed at the toes. I told him I had fallen from the hill while there was shooting practice. I do not know if he believed me, but he sent me off to wash and clean my shoes.

This was my first "baptism of fire".

We would also go to this part of the shooting range to smoke. The first time I tried a cigarette I felt sick. My classmates thought that I had another sort of illness and took me to the infirmary, attended by Father Molina who, after a brief examination, found the root of my problems. He gave me a severe reprimand and the ill-effects soon passed.

CHAPTER II
We move to Quillota

I was not yet ten years old when my mother fell ill and the doctor recommended a change of climate. As a result we moved to Quillota –an inland town nearby– to a country house at 940 Pudeto Street which my father had bought. As it was an old building, my father had the place arranged and refurbished before we arrived, and called it "Villa Avelina" in honor of my mother.

My parents decided that I should continue my studies in the Seminary until the end of the year, but as I did not get used to being away from my family, towards the end of the year I was transferred to the Instituto de Quillota, as it was then called. This school was run by Marist brothers, excellent teachers who attached great importance to discipline and the moral formation of youth.

Among the students were several older boys who came to school on horseback from the nearby village of Boco where they lived. You could see them galloping up Santa Isabel Street, lifting a huge cloud of dust. Upon reaching the school, they would rein in their horses, dismount, and tie them to a pole in the street on one side of the school. They would usually enter the classroom to the loud rattle of their spurs.

On weekends an holidays we would go out on excursions with our new friends and neighbours. We would go to Macaya hill or to the bridge on the Aconcagua river, and more than once we swam in the pool left by the river on the eastern side of the bridge. When my mother found out about

this she strictly forbade us to do it again, because every year people would drown there due to the whirlpools formed by the current. Her orders were not obeyed as rigourously as she would have wished, but at least it dampened our youthful impulses.

To channel our enthusiasm for swimming my father had a small swimming-pool built at home. Soon the pool became the favorite meeting place of our classmates. My mother was hard-pressed when she had to provide tea to the group of children who had spent the afternoon with us, and who ate with relish the bread, butter and cheese on the table. We were at an age when we could eat forever without feeling sated.

On one occasion, when the grounds had been watered and there was a pool of mud, my brother and I started playing in it and we got all dirty; as a result our mother decided to punish me. She took a broom which was standing near and whirled it about her head before aiming at my backside. I nimbly escaped and ran, pursued by my mother, to the end of the garden where there was a vine arbor. Suddenly a bee landed on my neck and stung me, making me stop and cry for help. My mother, in turn, stopped, put down the broom and approached telling me that it was God's punishment for my disobedience, while carefully removing the lancet from my neck which relieved my pain. She massaged the spot with her hand and when she saw I was well, she took up the broom again and beat me before I could escape once more.

The Sacred Heart School in Valparaíso

After living for two years in Quillota, that lovely village which is now a flourishing town, we returned to study in Valparaíso in March. For that reason my father decided to move us from the Marists to the Sacred Heart School run by French Fathers in Valparaíso, which was the nearest educational establishment to our house. We had not yet moved back to Valparaíso, so I was obliged to travel daily with my father, leaving at seven o'clock in the morning by train and coming back in the evening. As we could not afford to be late we would get up at half past five in the morning; this grew into a habit for the rest of my life, although I remember that the lack of sleep used to make me fall asleep standing. I always arrived punctually to school. Years have gone by and I still have pleasant memories of that place, where I had excellent teachers such as Father Gildas, Santiago Urenda, Augusto Salinas, Ramón Tobar and others for whom I have only words of gratitude and affection. On my trips from Quillota to Valparaíso I made friends with Ismael Huerta, later a comrade in the armed forces, who was to become vice-admiral. He would take the train in Quilpué and we would get down together in Bellavista Station; in the afternoon we would make the trip back together.

Among my teachers I remember Father Gildas for his strong love for France and his permanent "persecution" of students of German descent. To give an air of justice to his disciplinary measures, when he wanted to punish the son of a German he would first punish one of us who had a French surname, such as Malharé, Salahué and Pinochet, before he turned his guns on those he called "the Prussians", punishing them severely. As we knew of his weakness, we would ask him about Napoleón I and his campaigns. This produced a lengthy explanation, much to our satisfaction because it shortened the class period and we would be sent off without homework.

Once we formed a boxing club amoung a group of twelve and thirteen years olds. We collected some money and bought boxing gloves. In the afternoons we would meet in my house in an empty room and punch each other vigorously. Among the boxers were Gerardo Pérez, Favio Vio, Rolando Garay, Marcelo Malharé, Rosenkranz and various others. Everything ran smoothly until the neighbours complained to my parents about the noise, and they, in turn, forbade us to continue with this sport. In these circumstances, and wishing to practice boxing, we decided to go to the Coliseo Popular, a sports arena, where we were "trained" by a certain Professor Salas. He knew nothing about teaching and had no method whatever; lessons consisted in hitting each other hard. These classes were a failure, and the club ended up by selling the gloves to the same Professor Salas, who paid us with boxing lessons to which we attended only once.

My first contact with politicians

In 1930 Chile was suffering from the effects of the world economic crisis, which had serious political consequences. In July of the following year the President, General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo fell from power, and in the suceeding upheaval there were various short-lived governments. This state of affairs impressed me deeply because I would hear slanderous remarks against the military. The accusers were the same people who, years later, proclaimed the candidacy of General Ibáñez and secured his election as President, but at the time all their criticism was directed against him.

In those days of 1931 I visited a house on Victoria Street opposite Italia Park, and there I had my first contact with politicians. A friend and classmate had told us that the house belonged to the Conservative Party, and that those who went there were very well treated. They were given delicious sandwiches, soft drinks, and even money for the bus ride.

One afternoon we went to this famous political club. Some very kind gentlemen invited us to tea and offered us rolls with butter, cheese and ham, accompanied by drinks and huge cups of coffee and milk. It will be

easily understood that at that time of the day we were all hungry; we were not listening, just eating. However, after tea we were asked to stay on for a conference, and this we did. The speaker talked against Ibáñez and others who had been in the government, especially Arturo Alessandri; he declared that the country had been destroyed by anarchy and that the only possible saviour was Juan Esteban Montero.

None of us boys had the right to vote, and we did not understand very much about what had been said, but at the end of the speech we were told to keep in touch with the friend who had taken us there and be ready to be called at any moment.

The time to "pay" for the sandwich and the drinks came during the presidential campaign in which Alessandri an Montero were candidates. We were boys who understood nothing about politics, and who had gone to that place as a lark. Those who took the matter more seriously suffered the consequences; some of my friends were pelted with stones and bottles by the supporters of Alessandri or became hoarse from shouting at political rallies. In truth, this first political experience was more unpleasant than attractive.

A very special perfume

I was thirteen when my grandparents returned from Curimón and came to live in our house in Quillota. On Saturdays, my father would usually send us off to stay with them. We had to buy tickets on the 2.45 train that arrived at Quillota Station about four o'clock in the afternoon.

To buy the tickets he would give each of us five pesos. This allowed us to buy a first-class return ticket costing 4.40 pesos, leaving a saving of 60 cents which we carefully kept. Soon my brother an I decided to travel third-class, which cost only 2.40 pesos, which left a saving of two pesos and sixty cents.

On one occasion when I had to travel alone because my brother was sick, I was in the third-class coach looking out the window at the ships in the harbor, when a man started to talk to me in a respectful tone:

– Sir, I see you are looking at my ship, that one, – and he pointed to a large vessel. I serve on board there.

– Which one? – I asked with curiosity.

– The one with the Italian flag. Do you see it? – I nodded, and though I knew very little about flags I liked the courteous tone with which he spoke to me.

– Sir – he told me – you are surely going to visit a distinguished relative, and that is why I take the liberty to offer you this exquisite Italian perfume. I use it on my handkerchief and you can appreciate its fragrance. He quickly pulled the handkerchief from his inside pocket and made me smell the scent, which, in truth, was quite pleasant.

– And how much does the perfume cost? – I asked.

– It is so many lire, which is about eight Chilean pesos.

– I do not have that much money.

– But I see that you are a person that wishes to make a good impression on someone you love. I understand, and I am willing to reduce the price.

We haggled for a while and finally the Italian – if he really was one – remained with the two pesos and 60 cents, the whole of my savings. In exchange he furtively passed me the flask and quickly left, jumping down from the train which already started.

I made the trip with the flask carefully wrapped in a handkerchief, so as to use it should it spill. I arrived at Quillota where my grandmother Inés Rosa was expecting me, affectionate as ever with a nice tea with home-made bread, cakes and sweets. After tea, I quickly went to the end of the garden and pulled out my treasure. I opened the wrapping with great care, removed the cap, and with anger and impotence discovered that the liquid, reeked of fetid ammonia. I flung it away and returned to the house very upset. Of course I never told anybody about this deception.

Years have passed, but the story of the "Italian" still comes to my mind whenever someone tries to deceive me. I become especially wary when the initial offers are quickly reduced or when smooth words are used to make a deal.

CHAPTER III
At the Military Academy

My Admission

I was never late for school because my father was very strict about punctuality and imbuied us with the same trait. But in the afternoons, before going to classes at two-thirty, we would meet with a group of friends at a tea-shop on one side of Victoria Theater. There we would talk about various subjects and exchange all sorts of ideas or stories going around town. We even thought about forming a troupe to travel the length of the country presenting "Marina", a Spanish operetta. Illusions of youth. We often went to rehearse in a semi-abandoned theater on Argentina Avenue. For me, however, those rehearsals were only that; those who took it seriously suffered a painful failure.

Some years before I entered the Military Academy, my father agreed to my request to learn fencing, and I took lessons with a fencing master by the name of Bravo who taught me to use the sabre. This training was to prove useful in my military career.

On three occasions I applied for admission to the Military Academy. The first time, in 1931, I was turned down because I was too young; the second time, in 1932, because I was too weak on account of my rapid growth. Finally I was admitted in 1933.

The year before I entered the Military Academy, my grandmother Inés Rosa Martínez Bravo died. I loved her very much and she had always been very affectionate with me. On her death I lost contact with her husband; I looked for him but to no avail. Only after many years did I learn

about him, and how he had died in San Pedro, near Quillota, where he had bought a villa to grow flowers for sale, at which he was an expert, and had prospered.

My great fear when I entered the Military Academy was that my leg would not resist the strenuous exercises. But there I realised that my recovery had been complete, that my left leg was normal and that I could run and jump without any problem. I was even able to do sports and take part in the long marches required. Never again did my knee ache; only with the passing of time did I get slight pains in cold weather.

When I left the Military Academy in 1936 my mother was still keeping her promise of dressing in brown, and I started to keep mine, dressing in that color for two years. In January 1937, I went to the church on Blanco Encalada on the west side of the Club Hípico – the horse-racing club– and had a small plaque put up in testimony of my gratitude to Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro for the miracle she had worked on me. It is still there.

I think that the moment I entered the Military Academy in Santiago was the happiest day of my life. The school, where we were taught to love our country and do our duty, occupied an old building on Blanco Encalada Street. After submitting to tests and fulfilling the other requirements in January, I received a telegram in mid–February 1933 saying I had been accepted. I had to report on March 3rd. I was delighted for my wish was coming true.

I travelled with my mother from Valparaíso on the day before. Next morning she accompanied me to the ample portals of the Academy, which seemed to me immense. The first thing I noticed was a big clock which set the time for the whole school. Some of the older cadets told us how a student had been expelled for arriving just when the clock marked the time of arrival. This meant that you were expected to be back at least one minute before the deadline.

As soon as my mother handed me over to the officer at the Academy we were told to form, and I was given a place in the ranks with the instruction that I would always keep that place until I was moved to another one. We were then taken to the clothing and equipment store, and there we were provided with white sailcloth clothing, large and rough, and ample fitting shorts, keeping our shoes until the following day when we were given regulation short military boots.

We all accepted with good humor the oversize outfits we had been provided with. We then went on to receive our linen. We spread a blanket on the floor and placed on it the shirts, nightshirts, sheet, slipovers, etc. With this huge bundle we trotted off to the second courtyard where we handed this over to the clothesroom. The officer in charge read a list and assigned me the number 197 with which I was to mark all my belongings, the number which I kept until I was admitted to the Military Course.

By the end of the day we were exhausted, and all our muscles ached. Nevertheless, no one complained, and we bore it all, happy to begin to temper our bodies and shape our military spirit.

The first twenty days were the hardest in my life. Military training started at seven o'clock in the morning and by the time it finished at nine o'clock in the evening, we were tired out. However we soon noticed the exercises proved easier and the fatigue of the first day diminished.

When I entered the Academy I lost contact with my friends in Valparaíso: Gerardo Pérez, Oscar Cristi, who had already been admitted to the Police Academy, Jaime Tomás, René Olivares, Jimmy Braun and many others of whom I keep a pleasant memory.

During my first days at the Military Academy, more than once I cried at night missing my mother and home, but fatigue and exhaustion from the daily duties made us forget the comforts of our homes and we fell deeply asleep as soon as we laid our heads on our pillows. We were completely absorbed by the demands of the school. That first year as a conscript I had to suffer, as did all the new cadets, the bullying of the older ones or of the head cadets, who obliged us to polish shoes, sweep the classrooms, clean the brass keys and do a thousand activities to which we were unaccustomed, either at home or at school. It was a trial we had to accept and we did it willingly.

After lunch and dinner in the mess hall, there was a rest period during which we talked, laughed, exchanged the latest news, smoked, played billiards, wrote letters or did similar activities. Those were peaceful moments, but usually we were taken to the disciplinary room where we spent that recess doing exercises as a punishment for being late in our instruction or having incurred in faults, many times involuntarily or through ignorance. Military instruction lasted more than thirty days. It consisted only of exercises, physical education, shooting and military knowledge. At the end of that period school classes began. Thereafter, military instruction was confined to the afternoons, and we began to study military theory in parallel with the high school subjects.

Cadets and teachers

The teachers of the Military Academy were reputed to be strict but excellent teachers, especially some of them who had been in the school for many years. However, two new teachers arrived that year, and from their first class on proved rather lenient. This was quickly perceived by the eldest cadet who began to take advantage of the situation; others followed suit, missing classes while others gave excuses for them pretending they were sick. The head of the class, a cadet of the previous year who was repeating due to an illness, would tell these teachers: "Cadet Gómez" is

absent, on guard in the breech" (part of a shotgun), or Cadet Pérez had an appointment with Mr Schneider (an artillery cannon). Things were going fine until the day the teacher arrived with the officer on duty and the story was completely different. The teacher asked: "Is there no one on guard in the breech?", upon which the officer simply said that he would talk with the head cadet after classes. The following day we had a new head of class. The previous one was punished with two Sundays without leave for deceiving a teacher.

From those years I keep memory of some teachers who had very particular traits. One of them was a distinguished lawyer whose classes were very monotonous. It was difficult to keep awake during his lessons. We gave him several surnames as "Chinese Dream", "Dominal", "Adelina", all sleep-inducing medicines. On the first test he gave us, he wrote the topic on the blackboard and sat down to read the newspaper. In view of the opportunity available we all started to copy freely. As soon as the bell rang we got up, handed in our papers and went out happily to recess confident of our success.

The days passed by, and we were all thinking of the excellent grades we had obtained. However when he read them out we discovered they were the lowest we had ever received, and while he handed out the tests he commented to one: "You do not even know how to copy"; to another: "you misplaced the sheet and copied the wrong subject". Everyone was the object of an acid remark.

When we left the class, we all asked ourselves how did he do it, for he was reading the paper he could not possibly have seen us copying. Several of us got together to comment on our failure. We thought he used a mirror, or that he saw us through the reflection on the window panes which seemed almost impossible. An older cadet from another class explained how the teacher managed to keep an eye on us. He informed us that the teacher made a small hole in the paper through which he could see what was happening in the room.

We unanimously decided to change his newspaper. We noticed that he read the "Diario Ilustrado". On the following occasion, we bought a copy of that paper, folded it exactly as he used to and exchanged one for the other at the first opportunity. But that day he did not read the paper; instead he walked up and down the classroom during the whole period so that we were not able to copy one word. Ten minutes after the test had started, he told us to place our textbooks and copybooks on the floor on the right hand side and, thus, we were absolutely disarmed. From that time onwards we opted for the safest way, that is to study and not to think up new tricks which were not only liable to backfire, but could bring disciplinary sanctions upon us.

Pupils generally suffered from the meanness of the grades both because teachers were too strict in marking our work and because they were skilled in catching those who wanted to copy. We held every one of our teachers in awe and fear, but as they were good teachers we did not complain.

On another occasion the class noticed that a teacher did not write down the questions he would ask us, and so we agreed to prepare one basic subject which we would write out previously. When we were to hand in our tests, we would change the papers written in class with the one kept in our coat pocket. We carried out our plan. That afternoon in the mess hall we celebrated this bright idea which had come from a cadet with a French surname, but who was really of Arab descent. The day came when the teacher gave us back our tests duly corrected. He told us he was very pleased by the knowledge the cadets had shown of the subject. He made several other encouraging remarks, adding that since there were many pupils who had not had time to develop the matter fully, he would repeat the test that same afternoon. We were completely taken by surprise, and the new test put in evidence our almost total ignorance, because what we remembered was but one fourth of what we had written before. In short, he gave us a good lesson. However, from then on he never again forgot to write down in the classbook the questions he asked, and the grades we obtained in that subject during that time were never above a 3 out of 7.

Our revenge did not take long; we called him Foyeque –an old Ford car– and when we had classes with him we put on the door or on his desk a car license plate. He never felt alluded, but we kept on getting the same low grades and had to study hard to pass at the end of the year.

This is what happened with another teacher. The head of the class made us stand next to the bench to report on the absentees before starting the class. Suddenly we heard a loud voice from one side calling "Catero", the nickname we gave him and which he knew. There was a great silence, the teacher went out of the room expecting to find the person who had insulted him outside, but again the misterious voice called from within the room: "Catero". There were restrained laughs among the cadets and the question of the teacher resounded in the classroom: "Who spoke without leave"? Nobody answered; he asked again, and there was absolute silence once more. He then threatened us stating he would report the incident, and the whole class would be punished, a sanction we all hated because that way the innocent suffered together with the guilty. He asked for the last time and cadet Muñoz got up and said "It was I, sir". The class was expecting an outburst from the teacher but nothing happened; he only ordered: "Follow me" and took the culprit to the officer on duty, with whom he returned in a few minutes. The officer told the class that Muñoz was

sorry and that he would make a public apology to the teacher. We all waited to hear his explanation with began thus: "You know, sir, that I would never dare to call you "Catero", but our dear teacher whom nobody calls "Catero". Moreover, if I said or were to say "Catero" it was because I heard "Catero" in the yard, and I uttered the word "Catero" in class without refering to you, that, as "Catero", I think,...". At this point the teacher interrupted him and told him to stop, that it was all right, that he accepted his apologies, and sent him to his place before starting his class. Three weeks went by and Muñoz was not called up for oral questioning. At the end of the term, cadet Muñoz was asked about all that had been treated in class; he only got a 1,5 and no one could say a word because he questioned him only on what had been studied during the term, and about which, as was to be expected, Muñoz knew very little. He paid dearly for having called him "Catero" for, during that test, he kept on telling him "I shall help you", and would then proceed to ask about that where he had shown most ignorance. This procedure caused the desired effect, for after that no one said "Catero" again, or did so only in a hushed voice.

The Spanish teacher was an excellent character, but had a tremendous ego. His portly frame was hardly compatible with the sonnets of Valle Inclán which he would make us read over and over again for his pleasure. He would tell us about his numerous adventures in which he was always the hero, in spite of his stout physique. One which he greatly enjoyed telling was as follows: When, in 1931, there had been cavalry charges on the Alameda "he had been there". In one of those attack, the horses passed so close to him that he had been forced to climb on a bench to avoid being trampled. Fortunately the officer in charge had been one of his students; seeing him in that situation, he turned his horse aside and shouted: "to the rump, Pancho", and he managed to jump on and get away. The story was greeted with restrained laughter and met with awkward questions: How had he managed to pull up his 120 kilos in one leap? He would reply that, in spite of his weight he was very agile, and that every day he jogged round the parade ground of Cousiño Park (now O'Higgins Park) to keep in shape.

Presentation in Congress and first disciplinary sanction

Early in May there were rumors among the freshmen cadets that the ones who had progressed most in the handling of the rifle would be selected to take part in the formation of May 21st when the President, don Arturo Alessandri, read his Annual Address on the State of the Nation.

Since that day we made a special effort to practice two things: regulation marching step and rifle handling. I was fortunate in being chosen and formed for the assigned day. I think it was only will-power which helped us to keep erect and bear the crested helmet which seemed to weigh a

ton, but most of us managed to resist the four hours during which the President spoke. On our return to the Academy that day, we were rewarded with a special leave to spend the night in the house of our tutor.

Little by little we got used to the strict shedule of activities which was made known in the Order of the Day. Days went by as usual, and our only concern was to get good marks and not to incur in faults so as to be able to go out on Sundays or Saturdays afternoons. One of those Saturdays I was called by a brigadier to clean his shoes, which I refused to do. I was taken before the officer on duty, and the brigadier told him I had not obeyed an order, without saying what the order was. For this I was punished with four Sundays without leave. I remember having explained this situation to my tutor, Captain Portales, who replied: "you should have obeyed the order and then complained". A good experience for a novice.

My first leave

The lieutenant in charge of our class, who received us and was our instructor, was José Estrada, a fair and just man with his subordinates. I met this officer later in the Maipo Regiment, and was very sorry when he died from a badly-treated appendicitis while taking a Staff Course at the War Academy. Our company commander was Captain Oscar Zagal von Bennewitz whom we admired very much for the correct way he wore his uniform, his military manner and the dignity of his bearing before the cadets.

From the first moment at the Academy, order, cleanliness, and personal presentation were instilled in us. My first leave was a prize awarded by Captain Zagal for hitting five bullseyes during a shooting lesson. But as I had no uniform yet, it was decided that the dress and equipment store would provide me with the necessary clothing to go out. My appearance was disastrous, but I felt happy wearing a military uniform and I thought I looked fine.

Gradually we adapted until we would show up impeccably at the periodic company reviews before the officers in charge. During those days we were also selected according to our physical conditions for athletic events and exercises. I made great friends with that group of young men, a friendship that lasted through the school period and continued when we were officers. I was incorporated into the wrestling team, and was chosen for the shooting team of the Military Academy.

Battles in Plaza Brasil

Almost every Sunday Plaza Brasil was the scene of fights between young civilians and military cadets, usually on account of a young lady. It was not always that we came out on top in these hand-to-hand fights with those aggresive young men who declared themselves antimilitarists.

The Academy forbade cadets to go there. Unfortunately, my tutor lived at 2012 Catedral Street, a block away from that square. When I informed Lieutenant Estrada about this, he ordered me to take a roundabout way to and from the house of my tutor, avoiding the square. I obeyed him because it was an order. More than once I was tempted to pass through there expecting a fight, but I knew it would mean a disciplinary sanction, having been previously warned about it.

The life of a cadet

Those were years of study, physical exercises and marches on Saturdays to Lo Contadora, situated on the south side of San Cristobal Hill. We would alternate between joy and sadness. At the end of the year the Academy travelled south in a special train up to Puerto Montt. Afterwards we were sent on holidays. As cadets could not go out without a uniform we were given two white shirts. We had received the nomination to pass to second year, and so from "conscript cadets" we were promoted to "old cadets" and future instructors. We thought it was the opportunity to get even with the new recruits. However this never happened, because the advice and counsel of our superiors helped us to avoid committing the same errors we had suffered. They stressed that one must be severe but also fair and human, to help those affected with any problem or those who have trouble with their studies or physical exercises. From them on that was always our guideline. The application of these principles allowed me to work with a group of young men with whom I remained on very good terms for many years.

The years as cadet are a time of continuous effort and constant worry. In sum, they are very hard, and you learn to value your home and appreciate the comforts it provides you when you are on holidays.

January and February passed quickly. With school friends and young girls of Valparaíso we organized outings to Torpederas beach, a place where I had often been as a child. I remember that in February of my first year my father gave me a ticket to visit the island of Juan Fernandez. Both the sea voyage and the stay there were very pleasant and left me with unforgettable memories.

Normally the return to the Academy took place the first days of March, but in the second year they nominated several "cadet instructors", among them myself, who had to return 10 days before the new cadets arrived; the following year we had to be there 15 days before the entry of the new contingents to prepare the reception, having been named student brigadiers.

In the first year I belonged to the Second Company 1st Section, the second year I remained in the same, the only change being the instruction

officer, as Lieutenant Estrada was replaced by Lieutenant Enrique Montealegre, an excellent officer, a man who knew how to teach us how we should in turn instruct the new cadets suitably.

1934 and 1935 were years of study an military practice. We continued our marches every Saturday through the outskirts of Santiago. Once a month we were taken to Peñalolén where we set up camp to spend the night of Friday and Saturday, returning to the school after lunch. It was there where we were taught to live on campaign, to pitch tents and to sleep on the ground covered with a blanket we took rolled up in our rucksacks. It was a useful and fascinating training for military purposes.

After the final exams we finished the second year spending ten days on campaign in Peñalolén. On our return we started to prepare the final review that took place a little before Christmas. On this occasion I was selected to present a wrestling show with cadet Mario Pooley, for which we were trained together with others. The day after the final review we went on holidays.

This time I invited my friend cadet Carlos Elbo to spend the holidays with me in Valparaíso. I got the authorization from my mother and before Christmas all those who lived in Valparaíso and Viña del Mar were allowed to travel there to spend these holidays at home so as to be present for the fireworks and illumination of Valparaíso harbour on New Year's Eve. One of my first activities in my native city was to pay my respect to my old teachers and friends of the Sacred Heart School. I had a long talk with Father Santiago Urenda who had been minister during my school years and was still there. The words of my old teacher were always profound. I have always been very fond of this man of deep Christian faith and a distinguished educator.

It was a pleasant summer, we used to meet in the evenings for parties in the houses of old friends or "porteño" cadets. We took great pains to behave properly with the ladies and to be as polite as possible. The fact that we now formed part of the Military Academy made us be on our best behaviour in our social life in order to keep up its good name. On weekdays we went to the swimming-pool in Recreo which was always crowded, and there we used to meet with friends, boys and girls, with whom we stayed sometimes to dance in the clubhouse of that resort.

In 1935 after a very hard period of classes and exams we were promoted to third year. As I had very good grades I was named student sub-brigadier of the second company of cadets in the second section. After a beautiful end-of-the-year ceremony we went on holidays. To be a student brigadier meant that our holidays were shortened by a fortnight, because we had to receive methodology lessons, to be better prepared to teach the basic exercises to the new cadets.

Thus we returned to the Academy before the rest of the cadets. During those days we were given practical and theoretical classes and after these lessons we had leave in the afternoon. We normally went to the cinema. Our leave was only four hours long, from six in the evening to ten at night, and we used every minute of that time. I remember we would come out of the cinema before nine and go to a drugstore for a hot-dog and a glass of milk before returning to the Academy. After a fortnight of instruction we received the new cadets cordially. We were very pleased when we noticed that the sailcloth dress for all the cadets had been replaced by a greenish cotton shirt and trousers which made us perspire intensely due to the strong heat of that summer. The day after the arrival of the new cadets we started their training, similar to the one we had received, with exercises the whole day. We taught the basic military forms and did lots of jogging and racing. At the end of the day instructors and instructed were exhausted. After almost a month cadets had basic military formation, they knew their weapon, and could recognise the grades of officers and sub-officers.

Being a student-brigadier or a student sub-brigadier is not only a distinction but also a sacrifice, for each of us to stay on duty every third Sunday, in charge of those cadets who had been punished or who did not wish to go out either because they did not have their family in Santiago, or did not like to go to the house of their tutors. On the other hand, to keep an eye on a class of cadets during their study period takes time away from the student-brigadier to dedicate to his own studies. We also had to study after retreat time and get up half an hour before the reveille. All this implied a sacrifice which we accepted with pleasure because it was compensated with the honour the Academy had bestowed by giving us a rank above the other cadets. As in the previous years, on Saturdays we would march with the company, now to Peñalolén.

On leave days the officers made a meticulous revision of the presentation of each cadet before they were sent off. More than one had to stay in, because of something wrong with his uniform. On one ocassion the Academy gave three days leave to everybody and all sanctions were forgiven so that the whole school could go out. Cadet C. had not gone out during the whole year for different reasons, but on that day he would also be able to do so. He got a uniform in the clothing and equipment store and as he did not have white gloves he sent somebody to buy a pair of gloves at a shop across from the school. It was the only acceptable item of his presentation.

The unit formed rank before being dispatched. When the officer passed review, Cadet C. looked a mess but the officer noticed only the new gloves and, as a way of raising his morale mentioned him in front of his classmates as an example of correction. When the inspection had finished the Lieutenant called him with a gesture of pleasure, "Cadet C...step forward". We

all thought he would give him a rough time, but on the contrary the Lieutenant encouraged him saying: "I have called Cadet C. forward for his excellent personal presentation". We were astonished when he continued: "This cadet who has been the whole year without leave has presented himself very correctly". But he could not continue his praises, for a cadet called from the ranks:

– "Colonel on the stone steps, Sir".

– "Company halt!", "ordered the Lieutenant, and went towards his senior to give an account of his company. The Colonel asked: "What are you doing?"

– "I was congratulating Cadet C. who has not been able to go out the whole year, and has now presented himself properly dressed", replied the Lieutenant.

"Let's see, Cadet C., step forward", said the Colonel, who had already noticed the sorry sight he was in, and ordered: "Open up your tunic". When he did so we could see his trousers were fastened with a tie as a belt and reached up to the breast; he was not wearing a shirt; he looked a mess. The Colonel simply said: "Go back to your place!". He then took the Lieutenant aside and said something we could not hear, but when the latter returned, he shouted: "You bastard! go and change into service clothes. You are under arrest for these three days".

I also remember the officer who, on the Saturdays when we had to march, would awake his section one hour before. With this purpose he would walk up quietly and shout from the door of the company dormitory: "First section get up, and don't wake up those sleeping". After this we would all be fully awake.

Time flew by, and soon came the final review on which occasion we received the rank of cadet officer before entering the Military Course. These holidays as cadet officer were the most pleasant of all. Time went by without noticing it. As in previous years we went to the beach at Torpederas or Las Salinas, or to the swimming pool in Recreo.

When we returned in March, just after the anniversary of the Academy, we immediately started with military subjects. This made us very happy because finally we would be concentrating on what would be our career. During that first week we were called up by pairs in order to select the escorts for the standard-bearer. Together with cadet officer Mario Pooley we were chosen to escort our flag.

Tactics, Strategy an Military History were the subjects in which I was most interested, the study of which last I have pursued throughout my army career, giving me many satisfactions. I studied the campaigns of the Wars of Independence, the Liberation Expedition to Peru, the war against the Peru-Bolivian Confederation and the War of the Pacific. Because of

this last, I always asked to be assigned to the garrisons in the north of Chile, whenever the Personnel Bureau asked me where I wished to be posted.

In the Military Course my major worry was riding instruction because I was barely acquainted with horses, except for the times I had mounted one when I went to Cauquenes with my parents. However, after I was commissioned I practised horseriding intensely until I could ride fairly well and even took part in some competitions.

In 1936, the shooting team of the Academy had to compete against the universities, and we won all along. Our best rival was the Naval Academy, whom we beat by three points. I still have a clipping from "El Mercurio" of Santiago, informing about one of the victories. I quote in full:

"The Military Academy beat the University of Chile in rifleshooting. The competition took place yesterday morning in the shooting range of the National Club. Teams of twenty men took part. The best individual perfomances corresponding to the following marksmen: Julio Torres, Military Academy, 62 points; Rodolfo Hernández, U of Chile, 62 points; Joaquín García, Military Academy, 61 points; Javier López, University of Chile, 60 points; Augusto Pinochet, Military Academy, 60 points; Héctor Leiva, University of Chile, 59 points; René Llanos, Military Academy, 59 points; Alberto Jiménez, University of Chile, 59 points; Juan Schilling, University of Chile, 58 points; Enrique Guerrero, Military Academy, 58 points.

At the end of the competition, prizes were awarded to the winners.

The Director of Shooting congratulated them and exhorted them to continue in the practice of this healthy sport.

The Military Academy ended up the winner by 1.046 points against 1.023".

That year, 1936, ended with the participation of the Academy in the maneuvers in Llanos del Machete, where for the first time as students we learnt the meaning of joint efforts of the different services, which execute long movements and where a large number of men participate under the coordination of the High Command. When we returned from maneuvers the Academy started preparing the grand year-end presentation and we to receive our commissions as army officers with the rank of sub-lieutenant.

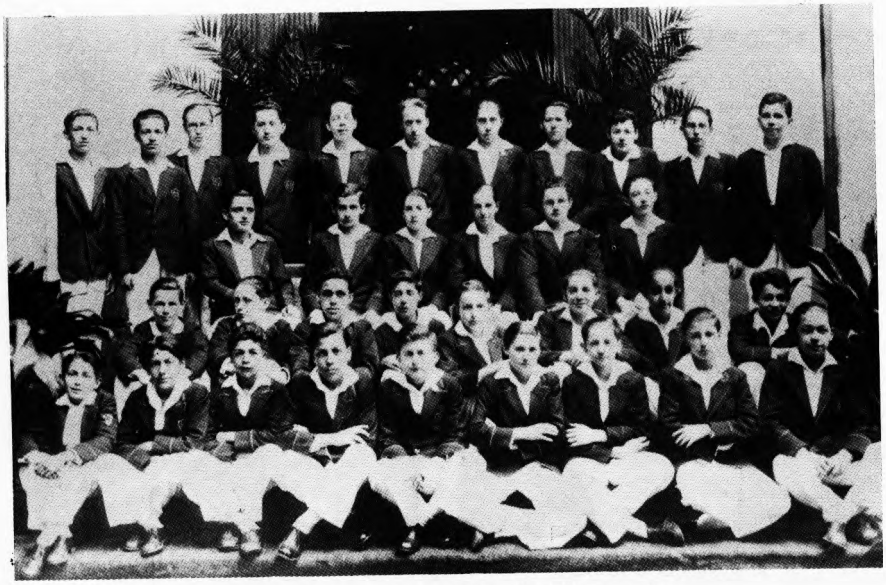
This final presentation took place in the main court of the Academy and the ceremony was honored with the presence of the Brazilian Foreign Minister, señor Macedo Soarez, accompanied by the Chilean Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense and the Army High Command.

The new officers were sent on holidays with orders to present themselves on February 1st 1937 in the different Army Training schools. I was to go to the Infantry School which I had chosen. Thus, my military career started on January 1st 1937.

The author's father

The author's mother

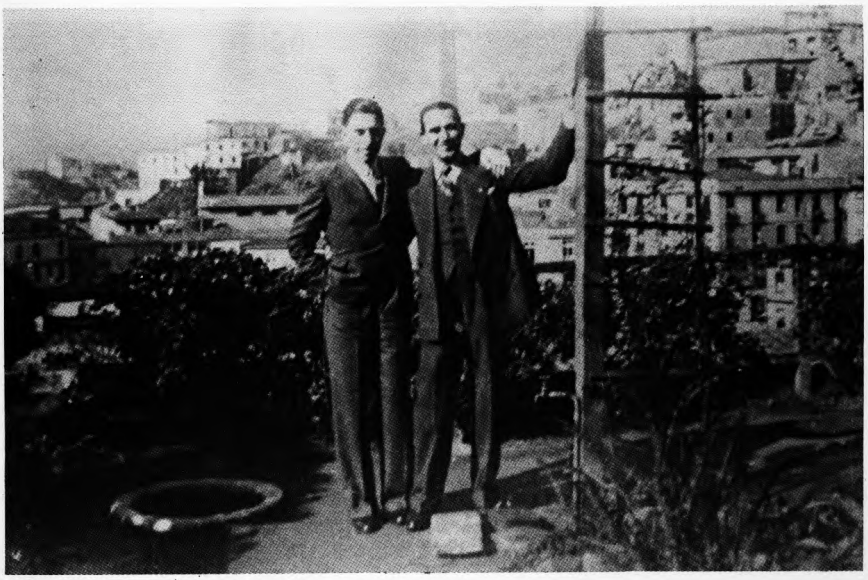
The author with his brother Gerardo



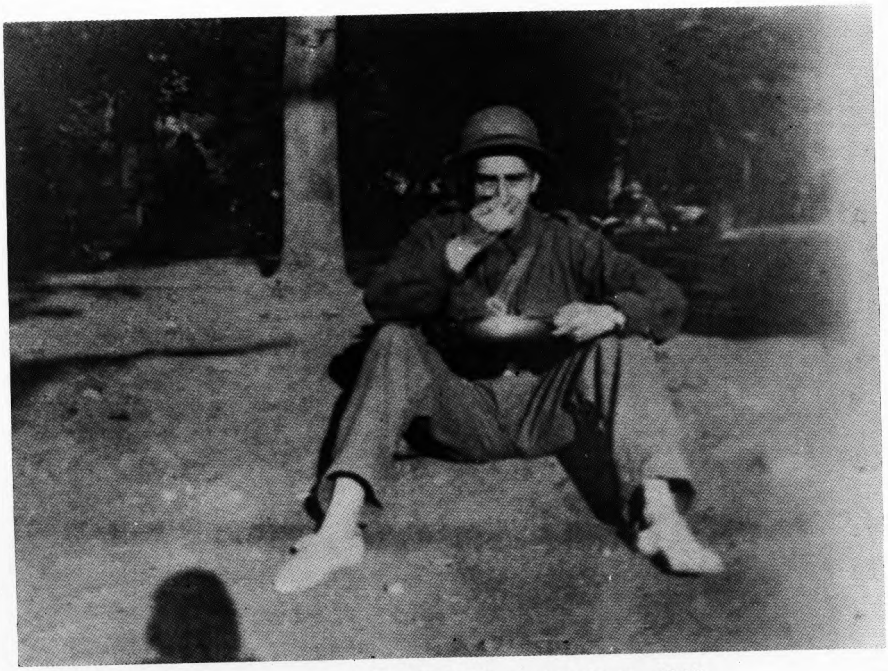
In the Sacred Heart School of Valparaíso.

At age 13 with some relatives.

At age 15 with two relatives.

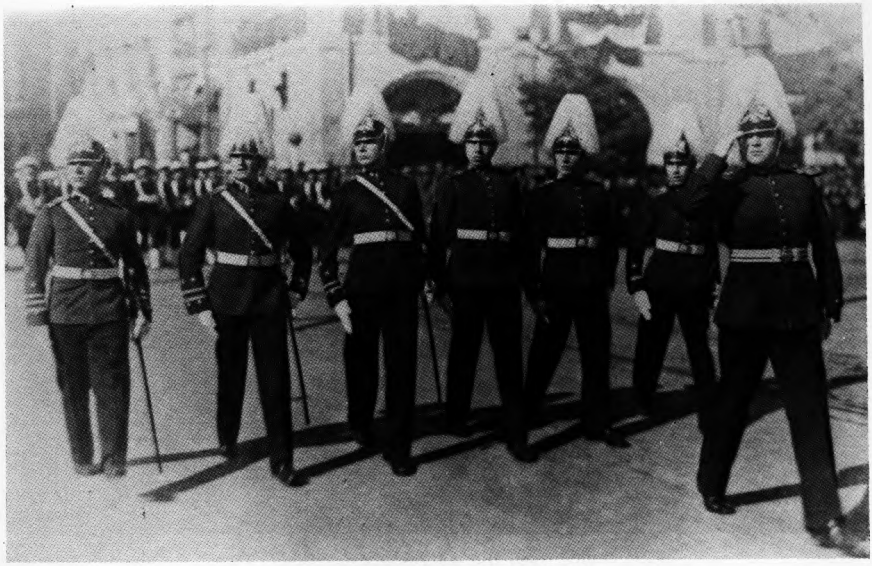


The author with his father in Valparaíso.

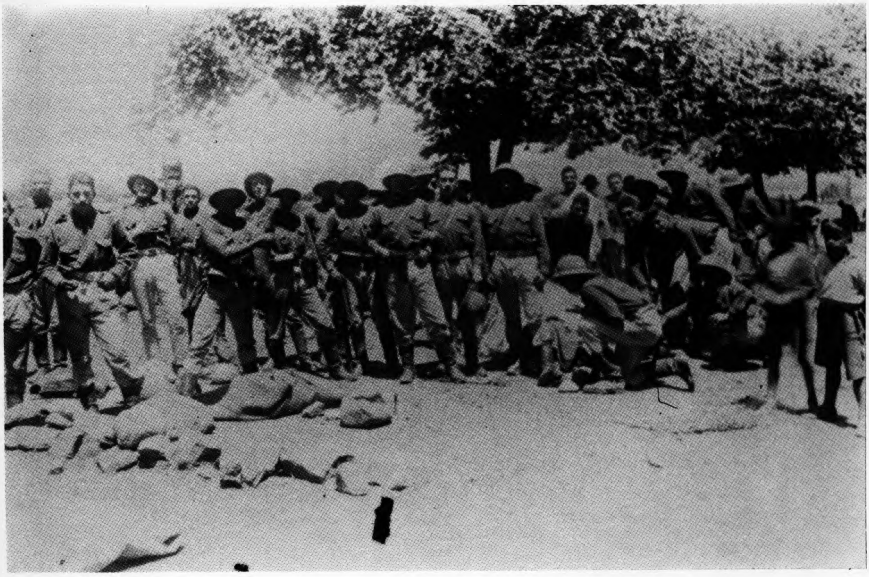


On campaign with the Military Academy, 1933.

Instruction with the Military Academy, 1934.

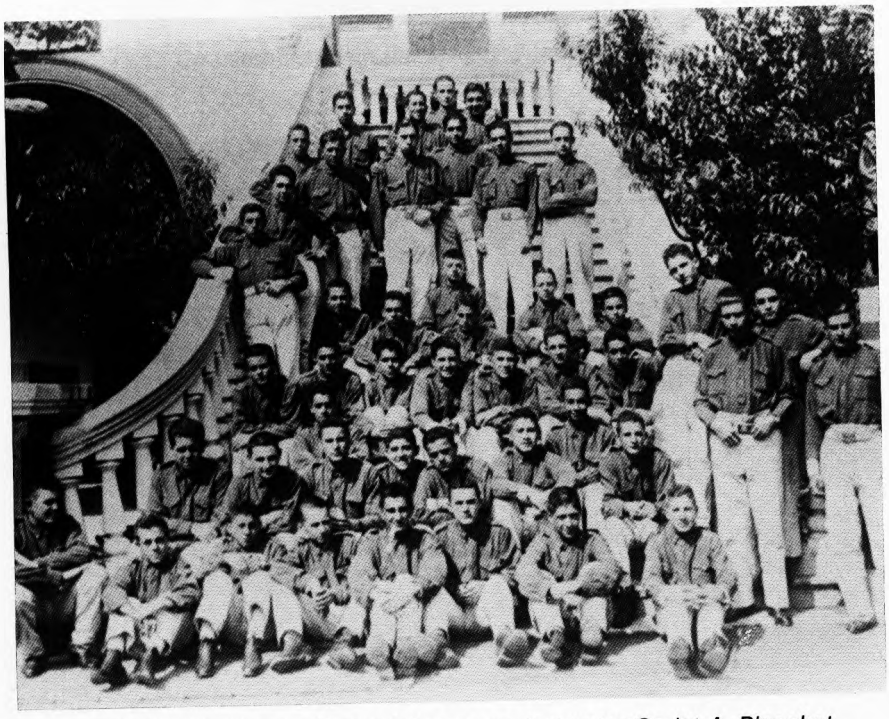


May 21st 1935 in Valparaíso.



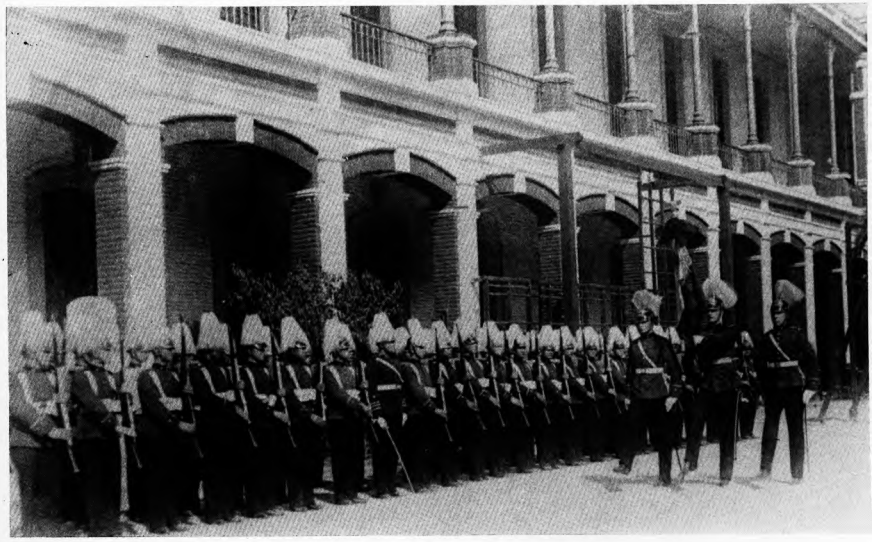
On campaign with the Military Academy, 1935.

Instruction with the Military Academy, 1936.



Recruit Cadets Course Second Company. Instructor Cadet A. Pinochet

Standard bearer's escort, 1936.



Standard bearer's escort, 1936.

PART II
FIRST STEPS IN THE MILITARY CAREER

CHAPTER I
Sub-lieutenant in the Infantry School

My class was dispatched from the Military Academy on December 29th 1936 and we were given the rank of Army Sub-Lieutenant from January 1st 1937. The day after we left the Academy, December 30th 1936, we attended a solemn ceremony at the Military Club, opposite the Municipal Theater, where we were received by the Board of Directors as members of the Club. The President of the Club gave a welcome speech. We were given the membership badges and afterwards there was a cocktail. During the same ceremony the "Military Club" Prizze was awarded to the best graduate in our class, Sub-lieutenant Jaime Ferrer Fougá.

On January 2nd 1937 we proceeded to present ourselves to our superiors, as prescribed. Our first visit was to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Oscar Novoa, who received us in his office and gave us a series of interesting instructions with great eloquence. Upon leaving we all commented his teachings about the behaviour of young officers, discipline, the meaning of an army career, the obligations, duties and privileges we had as army officers. We would never forget those words received from the highest ranking officer in the Army.

We were then taken to the General Commanders of the different branches, in my case to the Commander of the Infantry, and then to the General Director of Personnel, and put down our names in the Book of Officers kept there. After that we were free to make use of our holidays until January 31st.

Starting from the day I left the Academy. I had thirty days to arrange my personal matters. I joined the Military Cooperative Stores and there ordered another uniform. The tailor I met on that occasion was to make my uniforms for more than thirty years. In turn, my father gave me two brown suits, one light and one dark, to keep the promise made by my mother. I had been in Valparaíso just three days when my father asked me to fetch him at his office in Blanco Street. This I did, and when I arrived he invited me to go into town. We walked several blocks through Condell Street until we stopped at a shop where he asked me to choose shirts and underclothes. The shopping spree continued until I had sufficient apparel for civilian wear. I thanked him for his kindness, but told him that it was not necessary for him to do so again because I had my own income. However, as he knew my pay was low, he always helped me indirectly, because he did not want me to get into debt or to deprive myself of anything necessary.

My father was very happy to have me beside him as an army officer. I repeated the visits to his office several times and we would walk home from there. He would use these moments to slip in good advice. He would talk about his way of living, modesty, sobriety, his concern for my mother and brothers, the need to do one's duty, and other subjects. These counsels, which were presented unobtrusively and in a friendly manner, left me with teachings which, in time would help me to face many difficult situations in life.

In San Bernardo

January 30th arrived, and on that day I travelled by train from Valparaíso to Santiago. I spent that night in the Military Club. I was pleasantly surprised to meet several classmates, and we had dinner together at the Club celebrating our new commissions. It was the start of a road whose course we could not yet see clearly.

On January 31st I went into town and tried to find out how to get to San Bernardo. Early the next dar we took a tram from Avenida Matta to San Bernardo. Our luggage had been sent off by train from Alameda Station to that town.

That same day we tried to present ourselves before the Director, but the officer who accompanied us told us to settle down first and on February 2nd. we presented ourselves before Lieutenant-Colonel Guillermo Barrios Tirado. That same officer took us to the officers' quarters and showed us our bedrooms. My room was small, with an old bed, a wash stand, a wardrobe, a desk and a night-table. All the furniture was quite old and was duly inventoried as part of the room.

That afternoon we went to San Bernardo station to collect our luggage. We hired a horse-drawn cart which took our belongings from the station to our lodgings. We made our beds and went to dinner in a large dining room. The same officer then told us that we could have extra as food or drink, signing vouchers for up to ten per cent of our salary, and that no one could exceed that amount. This meant that we could consume upto about fifty pesos a month.

Next day we presented ourselves before the Director, who was considered one of the ablest officers in the Army. He was very polite and had great military knowledge. He greeted us very affably, asked us about our parents and made us several recommendations. The ones I remember most were those related to the mission of the Institute in the formation of young officers, non-commissioned officers and infantrymen. He gave us a long talk about living modestly (he was an example in that respect) and obliged us to open a savings account in the "Caja de Ahorros", now the State Bank of Chile. He introduced us to Major Carlos Casanova who would be Head of the Class. After the formal address, our chief asked us to go to his office where he assigned us to the different units. I was assigned to the 1st company of Fusiliers.

Major Casanova said also that we as young officers would have to know all the different duties of the sub-officers and enlisted men. He added that we would have Infantry Tactics, Methodology and Practical Combat Instruction, this last on Chena Hill. The Methodology classes would tell us how to teach the different exercises to the recruits, a subject in which those of us who had been student brigadiers were better prepared. As soon as the new contingent arrived we would have the opportunity to practice this, attending the different sections as assistants to the instructing officers. Furthermore we would form a unit for the practice of combat instruction. We assumed our posts in the units that same day and formed a platoon with the sub-lieutenants of the course.

Concerning hours, the Major did not set a fixed time of arrival or departure, but informed us that nobody could go off without leaving everything ready for the following day. He stressed the absolute need to prepare the work plan for the instruction of the following day, a practice I always kept. About the time of return, he told us that everyone was expected back before 11.00 p.m. on weekdays. He then sent us to present ourselves to the corresponding units. The five sub-lieutenants assigned to the First Company in charge of Captain Alfonso Poblete presented themselves before this distinguished officer, who told us some rules we had to follow and sent us to our sections. I was assigned as adjutant to Lieutenant Gerardo Ilabaca who had not yet arrived; he was coming to the Institute from Quiriquina Island opposite Talcahuano. In the meantime I had to take command of the Section, while my comrades who were left as adjutants looked on with envy.

After the presentation to our superior officers we were free and set about arranging our rooms in the officers quarters. The more zealous of us even painted the walls and varnished the furniture. The following day when the officer in charge of lodgings visited us he congratulated us for our diligence, order and cleanliness. We spent the rest of the week to settle down and to receive the weapons we would be using during the field course.

Practical lessons

The duties of the sub-lieutenants in the posts of non-commissioned officers and enlisted men, started on Monday. During those days I worked as a corporal in charge of the mess, in services, in the stables, etc.; in thirty days we had been through all the posts, no matter how humble, but all very worthy. Through this practice we learnt from our own experience the work each man had to carry out as part of his duties.

On the other hand, being adjutants to the section commanders when these officers were on weekly duty, they taught us to check the inventories of equipment and dress stores, the state of the armament and of ammunition in the arms room and to review the food store. In short, we were taught all that the non-commissioned officers and troops had to know plus the functions of the officers' weekly duties.

To make good use of our time while the contingent arrived, Major Casanova decided we should have combat instruction at Chena Hill. My first experience here was the baptism of fire given to the novices; this consisted in staying inside a trench while all the infantry fired above the same and some bombs burst close to where we were. All this lasted for about 3 or 4 minutes, with intense fire. As we were obviously not used to this kind of situation we felt rather shaken, but it helped to test our courage.

Major Casanova would take us every morning in the combat dress used by recruits to Chena Hill where he gave us combat instruction and taught how to prepare and develop the different subjects we would later teach the new contingent.

The second fortnight of March we had a lunch in honour of the arriving officers and as a farewell party for those who were leaving. At the end of the lunch Major Casanova invited us to socialize together and led us to a salon of the officers quarters. He stayed with us the rest of the day, until about 5 o'clock of the next morning. When he dispatched us he said he expected us at seven. You must imagine what it means for a young man to go from there, put on his equipment and be formed by seven. At the appointed hour our chief was there waiting to receive the report. He took us immediately to the Chena Hill and there carried out a very heavy instruction schedule which left us exhausted. At the end of the instruction he told us he would meet us again that evening. We were again with him until 5

in the morning and at 7 he received the report. We hardly had time to put on the equipment because we were really tired, but nobody wanted to lose face. The third day we had the same experience, but when he finished he told us: "Gentlemen, this has been a practical lesson; no officer is allowed to arrive late on duty nor fail to carry out the instruction work, which is sacred for an officer no matter how late he went to bed the night before".

Next day during the farewell lunch all our classmates who were candidates to the Aviation Academy were sent off. We met in the grand hall of the mess, gave them a warm embrace, sang the Military Academy Song together and they went off. Many of those comrades I would never see again, and some of them gave their lives in their quest to be Air Force officers.

Thus we passed this period until May 30th, the anniversary of the Infantry School. That day there was a very interesting combat exercise, especially for us who took part for the first time, and because of our ignorance in the matter, more than one of us was reprimanded. After this there was a big luncheon, at which were present the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Oscar Novoa, the Inspector of Infantry, General Espinoza, and other autorities.

In April there was a reassignment of posts, though we still remained under Major Casanova. I remained in the 1st section of the 1st Company. This unit received its contingent in the first week of April.

Recruit review

During the reception of the recruits, I could appreciate the great interest of the officers of the School in the selection of that contingent. Each one wanted to keep the best ones. The First Section received 45 men who, during the week were supplied with clothing and were asked to provide their personal data which was then set down in the documents prepared previously for this purpose. They were also given a final medical and dental examination after which they were ready to begin their instruction.

The period of individual instruction took place between April an July, after which we had the Recruits' Review. On that occasion the review was on a man-by-man basis and the commanders of the squadrons and sections proved their ability as instructors. This review was also an opportunity for the company commander to evaluate his subalterns. In those years the commander of the basic unit was in charge of qualifying his subordinate officers.

The Recruits' Review is an inheritance of our Prussian instruction. It requires detailed preparation both on the part of the instructors and the instructed, and care is taken to ensure the correct presentation of the conscript down to the last detail. Thus, every man is inspected by his

instructors, he is checked for personal cleanliness, his underclothes, his uniform, his weapons. His reflex reactions in various exercises are also analysed and his scores in target shooting are noted. All the above is presented before a group of authorities who witness the process with great attention and strictness.

This was the first time we sub-lieutenants made a presentation with recruits. The commander of every squadron, section and company, had to know the name of each of his men; squadron and section commanders were also required to have a notebook with the personal data of all their men. It was our first review and we presented it with absolute correction.

We were also congratulated on the presentation of the School exercises, as the doctrinaire exercises are called, both by the officer who took the review and by the School authorities. The theoretical instruction was also successfully carried out.

At the end of the Recruits' Review there was a big luncheon party where all we sub-lieutenants were congratulated. The senior lieutenants told us that now we were real officers. After this review we had a week's rest and the recruits received a leave of ten days.

On July 9th we had to pledge allegiance to the flag with the contingent. The new officers had to pledge their oath individually in the main square of San Bernardo before the men did the same. That evening the captains gave us a party to celebrate the significance of the event.

During this period of instruction we were also required to broaden our minds. Each of the lieutenants had to read a book, and then make a short summary of the same which would be commented and discussed. I had to read, summarize and comment two books: "The Rebellion of the Masses" by José Ortega y Gasset and "The Gallic Wars" of Julius Caesar with commentaries by Napoleon. I learnt to read fast and then write a summary of what I had read. I also had to talk about the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. You had to be well prepared to answer the questions which arose during the discussion, and I was pleased to have been able to answer all of them.

Teaching activities started in the mornings with games in the sand box, which simulated a field area, then came classes and lectures in the afternoon. During this period we also had field instruction with troops. On one occasion I had to act as commander of an advance combat outpost and in another as commander of the infantry reconnaissance. During those days I was kindly assisted by an Instruction Officer which guided my work on the application of the Infantry Regulations and Combat Guidance.

Our work and dedication to the duties and obligations of military life kept us from socialising, as we had barely enough time to attend to all our duties. The hours passed so fast and we had to deal with so many matters that daytime was not enough; we had to continue our studies at night, and

often we would fall asleep from exhaustion. With so much work I did not notice how fast time went by. Suddenly we were in September, and when we were to participate in the Grand Military Parade for the national holidays we received our transfer orders. The destinations had been published in the Official Bulletin N° 39, and the order was dated September 6th. I was assigned to the Infantry Regiment N° 6 "Chacabuco" stationed in Concepción, together with my comrade Juan Costa with whom I got on very well. He was luckier because his parents lived nearby in Talcahuano. His father was a rear-admiral, head of the Navy Administration Office. I had no acquaintances in Concepción.

We prepared our luggage which had increased by three suitcases, and sent it off to our destination. We then bought tickets on the night train to Concepción. It was an unsettling journey as I was not used to sleeping with the clatter of the wheels on the rails. Besides there was the uncertainty about our new post. I fell asleep very late. On the following morning as we approached Concepción a wonderful panorama appeared before us, especially as the train bordered the Biobío river amidst an impressive wooded landscape. It was as if arriving to a land of dreams.

CHAPTER II
From Concepción to Valparaíso

At the station we were met by a lieutenant who welcomed us in the name of the regiment and arranged for our luggage to be taken to our unit. He then led us to the horse-drawn cart which was to take us to the regiment. There we presented ourselves before Lieutenant-Colonel Miguel Puga Monsalve, a distinguished officer whom I learnt to appreciate enormously and for whom I have always kept a deep gratitude and respect. He gave us a cordial welcome, asked about our families, made some professional comments and gave us various guidelines. That same day we were assigned to the companies where we would serve. I was assigned to the unit of Captain Julio Ibáñez Ross; my companion Costa to the company of Captain Emilio Loyola Acuña. All the officers in the regiment were quite senior. The one above us in seniority had left the Military Academy four years before me.

Reception pranks

It is usual that when new sub-lieutenants arrive, the older officers play a series of pranks on them. Sub-lieutenant Costa and I did not escape from this norm. We had been told about these pranks in the School of Infantry, and so we knew about them, but as nothing happened we relaxed. When we had been a week in the regiment, we found in our letter-box one envelope addressed to Sub-lieutenant Costa and another one to me. Upon

opening it, Costa told me that he had received a mission from the Batallion Commander: due to repairs in the barracks, all the water pipes had to be measured, because the ones that figured on the plans did not coincide with the ones which had been laid down later. This meant the almost impossible task of lifting the whole floor of the main courtyard. According to the official letter addressed to me with the corresponding seals (or so I thought), I had to attend, on the following day, the funeral of a veteran of the War of the Pacific who had passed away that day. I was expected to wear dress uniform and then take the family to tea at the officers mess. The expenses incurred on this occasion would be paid with a voucher of the post exchange.

Soon after Juan Costa started breaking up the courtyard, Major Brown arrived and asked him what was he doing. When Costa showed him the official letter, the Major burst out laughing and told him: "Put everything in order, Sub-lieutenant, we'll talk later".

Meantime I was preparing to attend the funeral in dress uniform, behind the section which was to render honours. My senior comrades who were waiting for me behind the officers' mess, were laughing their heads off at how I had been taken in. I defended myself saying the official letter was signed Major Bravo (who did not exist) and that the seals belonged to a Company (in recess). Thus each of us had been the victim of a prank. There was a dinner later in the officers' mess, debited to the sub-lieutenants, during which the officers teased us a lot, but all in good spirit and bonhomie. The voucher we had to sign next day was rather steep for a newly-arrived sub-lieutenant, but we faced the situation without any complaint.

As I said before the Commander of the Regiment assigned us to those companies whose commanders were the most knowledgeable captains and the ablest instructors. From the first moment, Captain Julio Ibáñez Ross took me as his pupil in all the military aspects. His wise teachings helped me during all my career in those matters concerning military principles and tactical knowledge. Captain Ibáñez was a master of the small unit tactic, thanks to the instruction of German officers in the Infantry School, and in the field led the squadron, section and company with great speed. He was to prove it later in the company exercises. He prepared me during the whole time I was under his orders, in section and company tactics, without ever getting annoyed when I made mistakes. He was a born educator and a real chief.

In October, after the national holidays, an opera company from Santiago arrived in Concepción, where it would perform in the Municipal Theater. The regiment bought a season ticket for the officers to attend the performances during the week the company would be in Concepción. Every day a group of officers would attend the opera according to a pre-

established order. The following day that group would have to make a commentary on the show to the other officers. I formed part of the first group, which went in dress uniform. The opera shown that evening was "Madame Butterfly", which I had seen many years before in Santiago, also as a duty, when I was a cadet and the Academy had taken us to the Municipal Theater. I confess that this time I enjoyed the music and the performance much more. In the intermission I met a family who had relatives in Valparaíso. They invited me many times to have tea in their house. In turn I invited the daughters to the horse-rides we made on Saturday afternoons.

At the end of October we went on campaign to a part of the coast called Laraquete, on the shore of the Gulf of Arauco, next to the Concepción-Carampangue railroad. The camp was installed in a forest of eucaliptus trees, and that same day we marked the exercise field which comprised a strip of land between the railroad and the coast with a length of over 15 kms. In that area we carried out combat, section, and company exercises, which were very important for us especially because of the critical comments after each exercise. It was a masterly class which taught us many lessons.

The Chacabuco regiment returned in November to the garrison in Concepción, and we immediately started to prepare for the great exercises in the plains of Collipulli. Unfortunately I was not feeling well at that time, but as duty came first I took care of the troop and prepared the company for the field outing. I felt strangely tired, with nausea, frequently sleepy and exhausted for no apparent reason.

The transportation to Collipulli by train was prepared in detail. On the day of departure I settled the conscripts in their seats, sat down in my place and fell deeply asleep. My commanders who had noticed my condition, called a doctor who after examining me and taking my temperature diagnosed a very strong case of jaundice due to hepatitis. He ordered my immediate return and hospitalization. I was shattered and insisted to the doctor that it was only a slight indisposition, but he was adamant. As the whole of the garrison of Concepción was participating in the maneuvers none of the infirmaries was functioning. They were all closed, as were the officers' quarters, and there seemed to be no alternative but to go to the hospital. However the commander of the regiment ordered me to go to his house. I was taken there where his wife and children looked after me. I was in bed for about ten days. The doctor in Concepción was very concerned about my condition and even feared for my life. However I came through and after some time recovered, but my stomach was affected thereafter.

When I was discharged, I returned to the unit where the commander of the Regiment sent me on holidays in December and advised me to go

to my parents house to complete my convalescence. There I was attended by my mother and doctor Lachaise, the family physician.

A toast with Boldo tea

My promotion to Second Lieutenant on January 1st 1938 filled me with joy. I had to celebrate with Boldo-leaf tea because the doctor had forbidden me to drink any sort of alcohol. It was also during those days that we received a composite photo of the Officer Corps of the Regiment for 1937, which I still keep as a souvenir.

By the end of January I had practically recovered and was in a condition to return to service. I had to keep on a diet and abstain from alcoholic drinks. I then travelled to Concepción and thanked the commander of the Regiment for all he had done for me. He informed me on that occasion that he would be transferred as Chief of the General Staff of the Army Third Division and would be replaced by a new commander, Domingo López Olguín.

The change of commander meant losing the contact with a person I considered as a sort of elder brother. I returned to the company where I had served before my illness, where Captain Ibáñez was instructing the trainee officers. Due to my convalescence, I was given light duties for some days.

In February I started to work in full as an instruction officer in the course for trainee officers. We moved to Lirquén under the command of Captain Julio Ibáñez, with whom I became friends. During those days we worked intensely in the instruction of the trainees. Instruction in Lirquén was very pleasant. In the mornings, Sub-lieutenant Costa and I had combat and shooting exercises with the trainees; in the afternoons instruction was effected by the older officers while we prepared the subjects for the following day under the guidance of Captain Ibáñez. Afterwards we would rest and go to the beach. At the end of February we reviewed the trainees in combat and gymnastics instruction. The good results of the review left us very happy. Some of these trainees, were later to attain high ranks as Army or Police Officers.

In the first days of March we returned to Concepción, continuing with our instruction in the barracks until the class graduated.

During these days together with the graduation, the change of commander took place, when Lieutenant-Colonel Miguel Puga handed over the command to Lieutenant-Colonel Domingo López. After the change of command, the corps of officers held a dinner during which a memento was given to the outgoing commander in the name of the Regiment. The new commander ordered me to present it to him as the youngest officer and because of my affection for him.

I remember a curious incident on this occasion. At the meeting of the officers before the farewell party, we fixed the day of the same, the guests who would be invited, the menu, the gift, and the uniform to be worn that evening. There was disagreement as to what uniform we would wear until Major Brown said: "Let us ask the youngest officer present and we shall do as he says". Second-lieutenant Costa, who was less senior, was not there, being on duty. Accordingly it fell on me to decide. Everybody looked at me and I stood up and said: "Formal wear, as he is our commander". Some showed surprise, and others agreed. My proposal was accepted and we wore dress uniform, which was not to the liking of everybody, because for some of them, the uniforms were too tight. But they managed, even if afterwards they told me I was "pompous".

From reprimands to congratulations

The days passed happily by. But this happiness would be marred by an incident which was at first very serious not only for my career but also morally.

I was on guard —during those years officers went on guard for 24 hours at a stretch going without sleep and in charge of the security of the unit— when I saw a corporal drunk while on duty. Used to the stern discipline of the School of Infantry, I ordered him to go to the guardhouse and to be punished preventively. I also relieved him from duty and replaced him with a trainee corporal.

After a round through the barracks and on my return to the guardhouse I found the soldier making a scandal in the armory. The alcohol had made him quarrelsome and on my arrival his anger increased; he quickly took the rifle of one of the sentries from the rack. The weapon was loaded and the safety catch locked. He aimed at me with the weapon unlocking the catch. I immediately jumped to one side, unsheathed my saber, and when he tried to shoot I gave him a blow which stunned him for a few seconds which was time enough to disarm him. I locked him up in a cell and called the patrol officer, Captain Emilio Loyola.

The Captain considered that I had acted correctly and said that he would inform the Commander about the fault commited by the private. In effect, on the following day, the incident was reported to the Commander who ordered an investigation into the matter, and I was put in preventive arrest in my room. The first declarations were in my favor, but as the fault was considered a crime, a legal process was begun and put in charge of Major Castro, a transport officer and staff member of the Division Headquarters. During the next 48 hours I was repeatedly questioned in depth about what had happened, and afterwards I was free to take up my post again.

The Commander of the Regiment was very concerned about what had happened and scolded me in his office for having acted so harshly on an enlisted man. He told me that there were gentler methods for these cases. I believed that everything seems easier after it is over, but due to that I had had to spend two days in my room.

A mitigating circumstance in my favor was a similar incident which had occurred about the same time in the "Silva Renard" Regiment, where a second sergeant had been involved and no measures had been taken. Three days later the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Oscar Novoa, arrived in Concepción, and called a meeting of all the officers of the garrison in the great hall of the officers' quarters in the "Chacabuco" Regiment, which was the biggest place in Concepción for such a gathering. General Novoa was considered the toughest and most severe of chiefs.

I must confess that I expected the worst. I also learnt that in the Artillery Unit the non-commissioned officer had triggered his weapon against the officer on duty, but that the pistol had not fired. Even more serious was the fact that the Commander of the Unit had not informed the General commanding the Division, and on the contrary, had tried to cover the deed from his superior.

After saying a few words in his usual stentorean voice, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army called me up from where he stood. I was expecting to be expelled from the Army but my heart came back into place when he started: "Two serious disciplinary faults have been commited, but the only one who has shown to have clear concepts about this, is this officer here, Second-lieutenant Pinochet, who when faced with a breach of discipline did not hesitate to take the sternest measures. Second-lieutenant, please accept the heartiest congratulations from your Commander-in-Chief for your disciplinarian attitude in the face of a crime".

The Regiment Commander and the Division Commander later met with the Commander-in-Chief who rebuked them, though the details of this were not made public. My situation was, thus, cleared, and the Commander of the Regiment went from reprimands to congratulations.

After this incident, life in the barracks continued with the instruction of the trainees which was about to conclude. Once they were sent off, we started to instruct the recruit contingent of 1938/39. About that time I had to lecture the Regiment on the Battle of Maipú, and was congratulated by the Commander of the Batallion on my presentation.

During 1938 I continued as section commander of the 6th company under Captain Julio Ibáñez. My comrade, Second-Lieutenant Juan Costa, was transferred in April to Infantry Regiment N° 10 "Pudeto" stationed in Punta Arenas. It was a moving farewell; I was losing a good friend and remaining as the most junior officer in the Regiment, for, as I have already mentioned, the officer immediately my senior had left the Military Academy

four years before me. Thus, I became a sort of errand boy, but at the same time was treated affectionately by my comrades as the youngest officer in the Unit.

Some of my comrades from my class of 1936 in the Military Academy were stationed in other units of the garrison: Vera and Danyau were in the "Guias" Regiment, and Espejo and Arancibia in the "Silva Renard" Regiment. We would meet once a week for dinner to exchange ideas and comment about the problems we had come across during the week.

The Annual General Instructions of the Regiment for that year left me somewhat discouraged, for I did not see how I could spread my time, which would be clearly insufficient, and this was an enourmous problem for me. After reading the document and while I was meditating on this, Captain Ibáñez approached me. He patted me on my back, which made me stand up and salute, he smiled and said: "Look, kid, we are going to work hard, but we shall come out OK; I will help you with the problems which come up". I thanked him from the bottom of my heart.

According to the program of that year, I had to give my comrades a review of two Chilean classics: "Recuerdos del Pasado" (Memories of the Past) by Vicente Pérez Rosales, and "Recuerdos de Treinta Años" (Memoirs of Thirty Years) by José Zapiola. A First-Lieutenant had to lecture on the Revolution of 1851 and I had to make a critique of his talk.

Among my proper military activities, I had to take part in all the regimental and divisional war games, occupying various subordinate posts, but which required study and preparation in order to carry out my work sucessfully.

I was beginning to understand that the Army career required not only physical conditions but also the capacity to apply theory to practice, general culture, and a great respect for hierarchy. Time was always short and many nights I stayed up reading and making summaries, drawing formations, imagining combat situations, or familiarizing myself whith weapons, without going down for dinner or just having a sandwich, while I tried to solve the problem before me. It was no longer possible to go for a walk in the Plaza in Concepción, and it was only on Sunday mornings that we could go there and enjoy the band of the "Chacabuco" Regiment and pay compliments to the ladies.

The instruction of the recruits was carried out in the same way as in the School of Infantry. I passed the review of the recruits without any mishaps, and the Chief of Staff congratulated me on my instruction of the illiterate men, because all my students could read and sign their names. Teaching reading and writing was the hardest task of all, for it started just after lunch, which meant we had to run to arrive on time when the classes started at 13.50. The congratulations of my superior were a reward for the sacrifices of those months. Among my teaching aids I bought some pictures

the size of a newspaper, with letters and syllables which helped me very much in my classes.

As regards my academic studies, I was able to overcome all my initial problems. Captain Ibáñez taught me how to prepare and present a review of a book. Following his system, every day I read a chapter and then made a summary, writing down those ideas which had called my attention. I did quite well with the two books which I reviewed. As to the critique of the Revolution of 1851, I prepared it together with the officer who gave the lecture and who, naturally, was as interested as I was in doing well.

Discipline, social life and poetry

After the period of instruction during that year, and when we were not on weekend duty, we would meet on Saturdays and Sundays with a group of lady friends of the officers of the unit. We would go riding on horseback, and upon our return we would have tea in the officers' mess with the tasty "contributions" which had been brought by the ladies. After tea we would dance or one of the girls would sing accompanied on the guitar. Several weddings came out of these pleasant meetings.

These were unforgettable moments of carefree happiness after five years of strict discipline, four in the Military Academy and one as a Sub-lieutenant, but I think that this period, hard as it was, was also necessary for the future life of a military man.

The years 1937 and 1938 were the start of my long professional life, during which I ascended rank by rank until I became a general, which is the highest distinction to which an officer can aspire from the moment he enters the Military Academy.

As I have said before, some officers when they graduate from the Military Academy think that their professional life will have less demanding obligations. How mistaken were those who thought everything would be easier! On the contrary, we had increasing responsabilities and every day faced greater demands.

There is no doubt that everything turned out harder than one had thought. One often felt distressed on receiving harsh words from one's superiors, who, with the best of intentions, tried to instill in us a sense of responsibility, teach us and correct our mistakes. Military life is based on permanent criticism, destined to increase efficiency and improve performance. It is also beginning in these years that one learns to appreciate the special character of the career and the breadth of opportunities that open up before you.

Once a month we had a dinner of camaraderie, which allowed the officers to get acquainted better, but keeping a friendly respect. There would be jokes, humorous anecdotes, or poetry. Everyone attended these

dinners, from the Commander of the Regiment to the most junior officer, and sometimes we would invite the Division Commander or officers from other units in the garrison.

We were very fond of the poems recited by some officers. We would usually ask Captain Jones or Captain Emilio Loyola (who was always willing) to recite us a poem. The one which most impressed us was one by the Spanish poet Gaspar Núñez de Arce, which Jones would recite slowly in a solemn voice. I have always kept in my memory that first stanza, and after all these years I can still remember the melancholic lines:

Thirty years! Who would say
that at the end of these
my soul would be dull and cold
Though my hair not yet gray?
One day follows another
And my life has gone by,
Today stunned and surprised
My memories spill out
Across the various scenes
Through the years of my life...

I found that those verses hid a deep lesson on life and that the poet was right.

In the mess hall there was a respectful camaraderie among the officers of the Regiment, During our daily contact we would talk above all about proffessional matters. We exchanged historical information; some officers were real historians. There were comments on the world situation, but always bringing up the military aspects. I never heard in the mess hall a discussion of a political or religious nature and I came to believe that those subjects were not liked.

The "Seguro Obrero" Massacre

However during those days, when the fight for the Presidency had reached its peak among the candidates Carlos Ibáñez, Gustavo Ross and Pedro Aguirre Cerda I heard for the first time some senior officers talk in the mess about the "Popular Front", an alliance formed by various political parties, Radicals, Socialists, Communists, the Democratic Party and the Chilean Confederation of Labor, and how we would be affected if they won. However, it could be said that, in general, there was little concern about which candidate might win the election, and even less did I notice support for one side or another. What we were concerned about was the effect of the result of the election on the Institutions of Defense.

The presidential campaign was normal until September 5th 1938, one day after a great parade by the "ibañistas" during which we were confined to our barracks in alert in all the big towns. That day there was a great commotion due to a bloody episode which moved us deeply. A group of young men of the National Socialist Movement had taken over the Building of the University of Chile and afterwards the Social Security Building facing the Presidential Palace. The assailants were surrounded and the ones at the University surrendered, but when they were being taken to the Civilian Police Headquarters they were forced to enter the Social Security Building. At that moment a uniformed policeman was murdered, which provoked a brutal reaction on the part of the police forces: 61 persons were killed; among them, according to the press, three innocents who had not taken part in the events. This incident caused deep concern among the officers who rejected imported political ideas such as nazism; but we were also sad that those people had lost their lives. When the list of the dead became known I found the names of two old classmates from my school in Valparaíso, the brothers Marcos and Eugenio Magasich.

During that same month of September there was a great military parade at the Concepción Horse Racing Club in which the units of the garrison and Navy troops took part. On this occasion I was the standard bearer of my unit. I was full of wholesome pride carrying the regimental flag in a ceremony such as this one.

In spite of the political situation we were living in and the approaching presidential elections, we officers remained in absolute ignorance of what was happening, and did not care about the results. There was a sort of contempt for politicians, whom we blamed for all the recent evils. Our ignorance was a disadvantage when you had to live with the outside world. We would appear ignorant when we had to discuss these matters with civilians, and if in these talks, whether with good or bad intentions, they wished to know what were our political views, we would avoid the issue replying: "Excuse me, but we are non-political and do not like to discuss these subjects". No doubt a weak excuse, but it allowed us to avoid the issue and justify our ignorance.

The elections took place on October 25th 1938 and Pedro Aguirre Cerda was the winner by a small margin of votes, 3.773 out of a total of 440 thousand votes cast. As soon as President Aguirre took office, the nazis were pardoned and the party was restructured under the name of Popular Socialist Vanguard, expressly declaring that it was a democratic (the magic word) left-wing party.

Change of Unit

After the presidential elections the unit got ready for our next campaign outing. I then heard and later read in the Order of the Day of the Regiment

that the non-commissioned officer who had assaulted an officer would return to his post. I felt this was an arbitrary measure, for in my opinion, it was unfitting that he should come back after the incident in the guardroom. That night I reflected on the matter and, in view of the facts, I decided to request a transfer.

I thought it best to talk the matter over with Major Edgardo Portales, who had arrived in Concepción in September as one of the senior officers of the "Guias" Cavalry Regiment, and who had been my tutor during my stay in the Military Academy. Next day I went to talk to Major Portales, told him frankly about my problem and then showed him my request for a transfer. After looking at it for a moment, he took the document and read it out aloud, and said that he considered it appropriate and that I should go ahead as planned.

While our unit was preparing for the next period of instruction in the area of Laraquete, those of us officers who had been selected for the Army Decathlon on January 20th 1938, would train from the early hours of the morning and would continue with physical work until after 16.00.

My request for a transfer followed the regular course. The development of my professional activities within my unit was normal and the Company continued its preparations to go on campaign as we had done the previous year. The trip to Laraquete would be by rail and on the appointed day we took the train which ran from Concepción to Laraquete. That year we worked intensely during the field exercises, first in sections and then in companies. At the end of this period we returned to Concepción. It was the beginning of October. Service life had proceeded normally and time went by fast. The Annual General Instructions for the Regiment had been fulfilled, as far as my part in them was concerned.

When I arrived one morning at the barracks I was informed that the Court of Appeals of Concepción had confirmed the ruling of the Military Court against the Corporal accused of insubordination, and that he would be discharged.

A few days after receiving a reply to my request for a transfer, my new destination appeared in the Official Bulletin for December N° 49. I would be sent to N° 2 Infantry Regiment "Maipo". That same day Major Edgardo Portales called me on the telephone to ask me to go and talk to him at the "Guias" Regiment. When we met he told me that he had taken the liberty to write to his brother, General Portales, informing him of my problem and that he had asked for my transfer. Later, Commander López called me to say that I would be sent off to my new unit at the end of December.

Farewells

I started to hand over the commissions in my charge as officer of my Unit. Many were sorry to see me go, and told me so. Two days before my departure, the officers of the Regiment and some friends from Concepción gave a dinner party in my honor.

On that occasion they gave me a lovely memento which I keep among others I have received during my career. It is a small statue of an infantry soldier with a text recording the time I was in the Unit. I also keep among my papers a verse written by Captain Guillermo Larenas which he read at the end of the dinner. These scattered verses went as follows:

Es usted robusto,
Augusto;
La vida es de usted,
Pinochet;
No se ensarte,
Ugarte.
Ahora que se va a
Valparaíso
y deja en esta tierra
una parte
No olvide el buen papel
que aquí hizo
don Augusto Pinochet Ugarte

You are robust,
Augusto;
Life is yours,
Pinochet;
Dont get taken,
Ugarte.
Now that you go to
Valparaíso
And leave in this land
a part of you
Don't forget how well
you did here
Don Augusto Pinochet Ugarte

My departure was somewhat precipitated, as it was the end of the year and the Unit was preparing for the holiday period. For this reason I had to deposit part of my belongings in a storeroom in the officers' quarters and sent the rest by train to Valparaíso. It was the day before Christmas and my only wish was to spend that holiday with my parents.

When I was at the station I noticed ruefully no one had come to see me off. I was musing on the ingratitude of my comrades when Captain Ibáñez appeared together with all the Lieutenants of the Regiment and my friends from other Units. They told me laughingly that they had been watching me while I was looking around to see if someome was coming.

Before boarding the train, I hugged everyone goodby and Captain Ibáñez said: "We'll be together again, Sub-lieutenant (his affectionate way of addressing me). I was very sad to go. I would never see again some of those officers. A stage of my life was coming to an end.

Receptions

I arrived in Valparaíso and presented myself at the garrison on Christmas day. That afternoon I went to buy some presents for the family and friends and had a family dinner that evening. I stayed there until New Year.

On January 2nd 1939, I presented myself to the heads of the Regiment. That day I was incorporated into the Unit as stated in the first order of the day of that year. I was assigned to the 6th Company of Fusiliers. In the preceding paragraph of that same order I was allowed the use of the "police wagon" to collect my luggage from the station. It was the only means of transport available in the Unit.

That same day I saluted the officers of the Unit. I felt as if I was starting my military life anew. However, things became easier when I met some officers who had been my instructors at the Military Academy, such as Captain De la Cerda, Captain Estrada –for whom I always kept affection– and others.

After listening to my presentation following the ritual formula of those years, the Commander shook my hand and told me that Major Larenas would assign me to the Unit where I was to serve. I therefore went from the headquarters to the office of the Second Commander, and after saluting the Chief of Staff I walked to the office of the commander of the 2nd Batallion who was writing at his desk. When I asked leave to enter, he did not raise his eyes from the desk, but simply said "come in" and continued writing. I recited the presentation formula and when I finished he said "go away", still keeping his head down. I was very surprised, and criticised him severely to myself, while making a mental note never to act in that way.

Afterwards it was different because when I met the Commander of the 1st Batallion he greeted me like a gentleman, and told me I was assigned to the 6th Company under the command of Captain Mackay, whom I had met at the School of Infantry when he was taking his Lieutenants' course. He received me very affectionately and gave me three days to settle down and arrange my affairs.

I had not received the bulk of my luggage and I did not have my bedclothes. I told my mother about my problem and she lent me blankets, sheets, a bedcover and towels. I arranged my bedroom and then a soldier came in and presented himself. He told me he was to be my orderly. His name was Gómez but everyone knew him as Tripulina. He added that he was attending Lieutenant Araya and would now serve the two of us.

On Monday I took up my post as section commander of the 6th Company, and together with that I became supervisor of the dress and equipment store and the forage deposit. As soon as I took up my duties I put myself up to date as regards store reviews, personnel service records and other files kept by that Unit. The non-commissioned officer took upon

himself to inform me about the activities of my unit. During those days I was introduced to the men in the section of fusiliers under my command.

I set about acquainting myself with the contingent of recruits and permanent cadre, studying their service records and putting them up to date, writing down some missing information.

About that time it became known that I had been selected by the "Chacabuco" Regiment to take part in the Army Decathlon on January 20th 1939; I was therefore submitted to various tests by the Selection Committee in which I scored well. As a result I became part of the regimental team in the Second Division. We immediately started to train intensely.

The Maipo comrades were many compared with the ones of the Chacabuco Regiment. As I said before, I had met some of them as instructors in the Military Academy, among them Captains Cerda and Estrada, and others in the Infantry School such as Captains Ilabaca and Mackay. We junior officers were more or less level as far as seniority was concerned. Lieutenant Lillo was in my Company and Sub-lieutenant Ferrer in the 8th Company. We were all excellent friends and comrades.

At the beginning of January I began to train for the Decathlon. The whole team left for Santiago on the 15th. Much to the distress of my comrades, I had asked to be left as a reserve because I considered it disloyal to compete against my friends of the Chacabuco Regiment with whom I had trained until my transfer to Valparaíso. We arrived in Santiago and the competition started with the sabre fencing event in which I took part and got a fairly good score. I then took part in the 2.50 meter wall climbing test and was then free until the finals which would take place on January 27th in the Military Stadium.

January 1939 in Concepción

As I needed urgently to bring things that were still in Concepción, I asked permission of the commander of the regiment, Lieutenant-colonel Sánchez, to use the four days I would not be competing to travel South. Leave was granted.

I took the night train to Concepción on January 22nd and arrived on the following day. At the station, Lieutenant Guillermo Castellón was waiting for me, and took me to the officer's quarters where I was to spend the two nights which I intended to stay in that town. I immediately set about preparing my baggage which had been kept in storage, and which was to be sent to Valparaíso on the 24th, when I was to be lent a wagon to take my belongings to the station.

That evening I put on civilian clothes and went to have dinner in town with some friends from whom I had not been able to take leave. I retired early, and took a tram back to the Regiment. When I got off I met the

officer on duty with whom we remained talking in the middle of the street. It was the night from the 23rd to the 24th of January 1939. Suddenly there was a noise as if tons of stones were being moved, followed by a very strong earthquake. We had to hold on to each other not to fall to the ground. Lights went off immediately and a great cloud of dust rose from the ground. When the movement stopped we were in darkness. Soon light began to appear; cries and screams were heard. We choked in a cloud of dust. After the first moments patrols were formed with the recruits and emergency help started.

The light of dawn showed a terrifying sight. It is hard to put into words the impression of the catastrophe and the feeling of impotence before the forces of Nature unleashed. It was very hard and dramatic.

I presented myself to General Cañas who was extremely busy and had to deal with thousands of problems. He told me that it was possible that the "Maipo" Regiment would be coming over to this part of the country and that I could rejoin it then. Meantime I was to be attached to the "Chacabuco".

Salvage work had begun that night. Dead and wounded were removed from beneath the rubble. All that day since early morning we worked intensely. By night we were exhausted both physically and spiritually, after seeing such horror, death and desolation. Fortunately, nothing had happened to the officers' quarters where I was staying. Among the casualties was Major Brown of whom I was very fond. He was one of the hundreds of dead.

That same day I tried to get in touch with some officer of the "Maipo" Regiment so that he could bring me some of my things and clothing more suitable to the circumstances, but it was not possible to establish contact with Valparaíso. Six days later the "Maipo" Regiment arrived to help with the relief work in the affected zone, and I rejoined my Unit.

Initially, Major Larenas named me his adjutant, but later, due to the shortage of officers, he sent me with those at work clearing the streets. A few days later Major Larenas suffered an accident, when he jumped from a moving truck and one of his spurs was entangled. He hit the pavement with his body, was severely bruised and had to keep rest. His absence meant more work for us.

During those days I witnessed a shameful act. The Socialist Brigades which cooperated in the distribution of clothing, mattresses and food in the town were proceeding dishonestly. Of the four or five trucks sent with clothes and food to the city in a convoy, only one or two would actually get there. Many excuses were given, but it really was a simple case of stealing. These trucks would go off elsewhere and the men in charge would share out the goods among themselves or sell them. My comrades called them the Artful Partners' [Socios Listos] Brigades. To counter this shameful behaviour, we decided to receive the trucks before they arrived in the city.

We worked non-stop for twenty-five days. We were exhausted and General Cañas gave us a day of rest at the end of that period. I remember that I went to the second floor of the barracks, lay down in the lecture room there, used my cap as a pillow and slept from 9 AM to about ten o'clock at nigth without interruption. I ate nothing but managed to recover most of my strength and was able to continue with our work until we were given the order to return.

When we got back to Valparaíso our uniforms were in tatters and I never found out what had happened to my baggage which I did not manage to deliver at the station in Concepción. After eight day's leave, the Unit settled down to normal life in Valparaíso.

The Order of the Regiment of March 7th transmitting the congratulations from the commanding officer of the Garrison in Concepción, read as follows:

5) *TRANSMITS CONGRATULATIONS FROM COMMANDING OFFICER GARRISON CONCEPCION. For the information of the Units of this Division, is hereby transmitted paragraph 1 of Order N° 15 of the Garrison Of Concepción dated February 22nd 1939 as follows:*

1 "CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE GARRISON COMMANDER: At the end of the task in which the army has been involved as a result of the earthquake which struck Concepción, I feel compelled to leave on record in the Order of the Garrison the self denial and enthusiasm shown by the army personnel under my orders.

I consider their behaviour has been what is to be expected from men who understand their duty in times of trial. I consider, also, that the level of discipline which was reached during the work shows the high moral quality of the members of the Army. I feel proud to be the Commander of those who have acted on this occasion.

His Excellency the President of the Republic, the Commander in Chief of the Army, the local authorities and public in general have extolled the behaviour of our troops and work commissions. And this is all that I could wish for the welfare of the community and prestige of the Army.

For this reason a congratulation from the Head of the Garrison will be written down in the service record of chiefs, officers, non-commissioned officers, classes, soldiers and recruits.

I ask the conscripts who will leave the Army in a few days time, not to forget that this Military Institution whose uniform you wear today, is a school of public service, where you learn to serve the Nation above private

interests, and you should feel proud to have contributed with your sacrifice to ease the situation of your fellow countrymen affected by misfortune. Signed: Víctor Cañas R.T. —General Commander-in-Chief of the Army Third Division. Signed: Fernando Valenzuela de la Fuente— Colonel Commander of the Infantry of the Army Second Division".

After my return from Concepción, I was transferred, as from April 17th, from the Second Company of Fusiliers to the Fourth Company of Machine Guns. We inmediatelly began to prepare to receive the new contingent of recruits. At the end of April we received the contingent of that year, completing the complement of two sections of portable machine guns, which were placed under my orders.

The sections of portable machine guns were a novelty for me, because these were meant to have great fire power, their movements required new voices of command and there were new training instructions for the different formations and movements. All this obliged me to study the regulations on the matter and the specifications of the weapon.

To get a better knowledge of the equipment, I took a machine gun and a table to an unoccupied bedroom next to mine, and asked Second Sergeant Lagos to acquaint me with the weapon and teach me to assemble and disassemble it, which he willingly did.

We started to instruct the contingent with great dedication. We had the Recruits Review at the end of three months, and after five months the minor units were inspected. Everything went off well. We had Officers academies with commentaries of books. I also had to give a lecture from a book of my choice. I selected one on parachute troops which I titled "Flying Infantry" and was congratulated by the Commander of the Regiment. I based my talk on what I had read in French magazines and in the "Army, Navy and Air Force Magazine", a German publication which carried news on these matters.

General Ariosto Herrera

In mid-May the Commander of the regiment issued an order on occasion of the return from Italy of General Ariosto Herrera Ramírez, a great commander and soldier. After landing, his first activity was to visit the tomb of his relative, Commander Eleuterio Ramírez, a hero of the War of the Pacific. The order, wich I kept in my files, read:

> "Tomorrow, at a time to be announced, General Ariosto Herrera will visit the Unit with the object of placing a wreath in the crypt of Commander Eleuterio Ramírez, and will then address the Regiment.

For the realization of this ceremony the following measures will be taken:

a) At the appointed time the Regiment will be formed in the courtyard of the barracks facing the pavillion of the First Batallion, with its head at the level of the monolith in the center of the yard and in the following order:

— Band
— Company of trainees
— Section composed of available personnel
— Etc."

The Order stated that the Regiment would turn up in full strength, forming a line in the main courtyard. As the barracks would be inspected afterwards, it was decided to leave a recruit in charge of giving the last touches to the cleaning. Unfortunately, the man we chose was hard of hearing, and we noted with horror that while the Division Commander was addressing the Regiment the deaf man was sweeping the corridor on the second floor throwing the dust behind the General's back. Our anguish increased when the recruit decided to sprinkle water on the first floor and on the General who kept on talking, but nothing further occurred. The speech finished together with the cleaning, and the man went to his post in the dormitory.

Later we learnt at the Maipo Regiment that on May 21st for the inauguration of Congress, this general refused to parade with his troops while a red flag, the insignia of international communism was flying. The flag had to be removed before the troops paraded. Many stories have been told about what happened on that day but the truth is that the troops only marched once the red flag was removed.

On August 25th we received an unexpected order to remain in our barracks and prepare our Unit for action; we did not yet know what was happening in Santiago. At midday a colonel came from Santiago who, realising that nothing abnormal was going on, called a meeting to inform us that the Tacna Regiment and the Infantry School had rebelled, and that both Units were already under control. He added that, apparently, this movement was headed by Generals Ariosto Herrera and Carlos Ibáñez. After his speech he remained silent before asking us whether we had heard something about this movement; we replied we knew nothing about the matter. The following day we heard that, the movement having failed, General Herrera had given himself up and that he would be tried.

Echoes of World War II

At the end of August we learnt about the signing of the Pact of Neutrality between the URSS and Germany (the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of August 23, 1939). From that moment, conversation in the mess centered on the war between Germany an Poland. Maps of Europe showing the border between the two nations were put up on our bedroom walls, and we stuck red and yellow flags to indicate the position of the German and Polish unit. We officers subscribed to "La Semana Internacional", a newsmagazine , to keep abreast of the news. We all foresaw a German victory.

Poland was defeated in twenty days. For the first time we saw the action of the Air Force and the massive attack of tanks. As it was only just over a month that I had given the lecture on "Flying Infantry" I was proud to note that many of the conclusions to which I had arrrived regarding the use of parachute troops, were coming true.

When on September 17th. the Soviet Union entered Eastern Poland and claimed from its "friend" those Polish provinces inhabited mostly by White Russians and Ukranians, we thought that Germany would react, but nothing happened. During those weeks of military activity, a courier would bring us "La Semana Internacional" with which we would put our maps up to date. I find among my papers some simple notes on the heroic struggle of the Finnish Army in the face of the Soviet invasion on November 30th. Our main concern was to comment and take note on the way new tactics and techniques were being applied in what was known as the "Lightning War" (Blitzkrieg).

Our interest in the war did not abate when, towards the end of the year, the Regiment prepared to go on campaign and maneuvers.

"Spartan Soup"

On our return to the Garrison there was a change in the committee in charge of the mess. A meeting of officers was held and I was elected Mess Officer. The officers were always complaining about the cost of the meals. To reduce the cost of food, I ordered all the leftovers of bread to be kept and that on Sunday, when only one or two officers had dinner there, dinner would consist of a meat soup with grated bread, heated in the oven with croutons on top, and bread pudding for dessert. This soup I christened "Spartan soup". That month the cost of food was well below budget. There were many complaints about the quality, but I said that otherwise costs would go up; complaints therefore stopped and the soup was accepted.

Following the General Instructions for the Regiment in summer we spent some days on campaign with the course of trainee officers and the rest of the units in a place called Queronque near Limache. The unit had to march from Valparaíso to Limache and then to the place where camp would be pitched. On that occasion I was named adjutant to the Batallion Commander, Major Larenas, as the regular adjutant was ill.

The Regiment left for Limache, stopping at Villa Alemana, where the town celebrated the visit of the Regiment with a great party in the Social Club to which all the officers were invited. The party lasted until 3 A.M. and the Regiment left at 7.00. We arrived to Queronque after midday, where we alloted the different areas to pitch the tents. Each unit took pains to make its area look as neat as possible.

A practical Joker

Those days we were the butt of some practical jokes by a captain famous for his "funny" ideas. The first one took place during an outing to select the grounds for the field exercises of the units. We went out after lunch and on our return, almost at retreat time, he ordered a stop, and sent us to buy eggs for the mess, adding that as we were all wearing troop coats with large pockets, each of us could take a dozen eggs to deliver later in the mess. We bought the eggs and left for Queronque so as not to be late for the retreat formation. When we entered the camp the second call to form was being played. The captain said: "Hand in the horses and form immediately". I saved myself because being adjutant to the Commander of the batallion, I gave the coat with the eggs to Tripulina and went to see the Major who was about to receive the daily report. After the officers had reported the captain passed review. On seeing the coats of the officers with their swollen pockets he began to beat them with his hand breaking the eggs. Naturally whites and yolks started oozing from beneath the coats. Everyone was fuming. The captain was the only one who enjoyed the joke.

On another occasion after dinner a serious talk about ghosts developed started by the Captain. He told us there used to be an indian cemetery in that zone. He then left the officers musing about the subject, and without anybody noticing he went to the stables from where he took a mule which he introduced in the tent of an officer. He returned to the messhall where the conversation about ghosts and spirits continued. After a while he put an end to the talk with "Gentlemen, see you tomorrow, it's very late". One of the officers went to his tent where the mule was. He almost had a fit when he felt the breath of the animal and saw two eyes shining in the dark. He ran out terrified. In the meantime the captain had told the other officers about the prank and they all laughed at the victim.

At the end of the campaign the unit had to return to Valparaíso on a Monday. On Sunday, the Captain, of whom everyone was afraid of by now because of his pranks, invited a group of officers to his house in Limache to introduce them to his mother. We went there on horseback and so we took two mounted orderlies.

When we were having drinks before lunch at his mother's house, he asked if anybody wanted to go to the bathroom. Two or three did and when they went there found the tub full of water. The captain explained that you filled the basin with a jug and took the water from the tub showing how. While he was washing his hands, he invited the officers to sit at the edge of the tub. As they sat there, he leaned forwards as if to take water, but instead of doing so, he pushed the three officers into the tub. They were soaked in water up to their boots. There was great laughter when we saw the state in which they were left. The captain's mother was very annoyed and said: "This man, as usual with his practical jokes". To sum up, they had to lunch in a bathrobe and more than one had to wear a lady's robe while their clothes were getting dried and sent to the camp for boots.

Because of a glove

After the campaign in Limache, we had a week's leave. On Sunday morning I was lent a car with which I went to the Regiment and then returned to the house of my parents for lunch. When I was locking the door of the car, the Commander of the Regiment passed by. I saluted him without having time to put on my right hand glove as required.

He said nothing in that moment, so I did not worry about it. However in the order of the day of the Regiment for Monday my name was down for duty on Tuesday. At first I thought it was a mistake and went to the Office of the Adjutant to mention the fact. Great was my surprise when I was informed it was a sanction imposed by the Commander. In view of this I asked permission to talk with him through the regular channel, because I was well aware that the Discipline Regulations did not contemplate special duty as a sanction for officers. I talked with the Commander of the Regiment and explained him the reasons why I had saluted him with only one glove. He rejected my explanations. I told him then I would not accept the special duty because it was not a sanction applicable to an officer.

His reply was to give me a day of arrest, to which I answered "in that case I will appeal, sir". In the face of this he increased my arrest to 'two days, then to three until he reached eight days. I kept my calm, and only answered: "I shall appeal". The Commander of the Batallion was present and could witness that I never lost my temper nor was disrespectful at any moment.

As I said so I did. According to the same Discipline Regulations the sanction to the claimant is immediately suspended. That evening I went to have dinner with my parents and when I was returning in the Playa Ancha elevator I met face to face with the Commander of the unit who told me "You are under arrest and go about freely". I told him again that the Regulations allowed me to do so, and asked him leave to withdraw.

These and subsequent events were stamped in my service record as follows:

"16. Moral and professional conditions for command.

Lieutenant Pinochet is a good officer; he has good military conditions. However he had an unfortunate reaction towards the commander of the Regiment, who when he was reprimanded for a fault commited, made him appear as somewhat disloyal. This fact is in cognizance of his superiors. (Complaint dossier: Inf. Cdr. confirmed day of arrest, which has been registered in this qualification).

19. Opinion of the Commander of Arms or Brigade
(Superior of the Regimental Commander)

He is an excellent instructor. He is intelligent, of sound judgement and personality.

The fault committed did not warrant a day of arrest, and this Commander confirmed it because the circumstances involved made the offence more serious. His previous conduct has been excellent".

After the incident with the Commander of the Regiment we prepared for the manoeuvers in the hills of Chacabuco, which were very hard with marches and countermarches. None of the men of the two machine gun sections fell during these marches. I realised how right it had been to practice daily with the troops, jogging about 8 kilometers from the Regiment to the sport field of "Los Gringos" (now all built up).

At the end of the manoeuvers we boarded the train at Rungue for Valparaíso. Something strange happened then. After the Officer in charge assigned the cars for the troops who were travelling, the Second Commander called out aloud that we had to settle the men first and that we could not rest until the train left. The soldiers who were exhausted, fell asleep as soon as they took their places. As the Second Commander had said that we could not board the train until the departure, we gathered on the platform for a smoke. We were talking when two cars on a side track were shunted to be hooked on to the train. Lo and behold! behind the cars was

the Second Commander deeply asleep. We all chuckled because he woke up with the movement and tried to save face. We called him "Father Gatica" who does not practice what he preaches.

It was good to be back in our barracks, and that same afternoon the Regiment had a week's leave.

Then came Chrismas and New Year. I spent the holidays with my parents. When I returned on January 2nd. I found I had been named Instructor for the Trainee Officers' Course. The instruction was carried out normally. Among the trainees was young William Thayer, who would later become Minister of Labor under President Frei, and who has always been an excellent friend.

The period of instruction was divided into two parts and the officers took turns. When it was my turn to be relieved and rest, the Commander of the Regiment put me to a new test: I was to make in 15 days a survey of the road from Santiago to Valparaíso, through Til-Til, La Dormida hill and Limache. As a result I was unable to take holidays.

I had never carried out such work because it was normally executed by an officer of the rank of Captain; Lieutenants or Sub-lieutenants worked as assistants. The problem now was where to learn surveying as quickly as possible. I understood it was a trap but I did not give up. I travelled to Santiago with the troop and cattle and asked permission to stay five days in the Buin Regiment. It was granted.

During these days I asked the senior officers and geodesists to teach me how to carry out that task. I worked for three days from dawn to dusk. After which they tested me surveying the road going up the San Cristóbal hill, as a result of which I was congratulated by my teachers who told me that I could now work alone.

This reconnaissance earned me a pneumonia. When I got to Valparaíso I was interned in the Naval Hospital. Thanks to a new medicine I was able to recover promptly and was not late for my new post at the School of Infantry.

I continued to work in the Regiment until my transfer, dated April 30th was approved. I spent two days in the officers' quarters preparing my baggage for shipment. Those days also witnessed the arrival of the new Second Lieutenants, and I fondly recall the following incident. Passing in front of the telephone booth, the phone rang. As there was nobody near. I picked up the receiver and asked for whom was the call. A female voice at the other end of the line asked for a certain second lieutenant, whose name I withold. I replied that he was not there but in the barracks and did she wish to leave a message. The female voice replied: "Tell him Lucía Hiriart called". This was the same lady who, years later was to be my wife.

Next day I took the morning train to go to the Infantry School. Thus a long-held wish was fulfilled. Here I must thank Major Julio Ibáñez Ross, who had made a point of recommending me as an officer for that institution. Now fate would bring surprises and a change in my professional career.

CHAPTER III
Return to the Infantry School

At the end of April, I left the N° 2 Infantry Regiment "Maipo" for the Infantry School. I was filled with happiness because I was taking an important step in my career.

As soon as I was sent off from the Regiment I took my baggage to the station and boarded the train for Santiago. I spent the night at the Military Club, and the following day I travelled to San Bernardo. There was a new system of transport to that town, omnibuses, which had replaced the old trams.

I arrived at the School before 9 o'clock and went immediately to the officers' quarters to change my uniform; I had brought a new one so as to turn out impeccably and cause the best possible impression. After changing my clothes I went to salute the officer on duty, who informed me that the Director had already arrived and that he would receive me at 10.00 a.m. In the meantime, he took me to the office of Major Héctor Sagüés, a distinguished infantry officer, a stern but human man with great military qualities.

After greeting me, he bade me sit opposite him. He enquired about my stay in the Maipo Regiment, and we exchanged impressions on life in the School. At the appointed time he took me to the office of the Director, who was the same officer I had known when I passed through the School in 1937; he was then a Lieutenant Colonel and had now risen to full Colonel. He was one of the most prestigious officers in the Army because

of his capacity and vast knowledge; he reached high posts in the Institution and later became Minister of Defense. I have always thought how much I owe to his teachings during my nearly three years in the Infantry School. He received me kindly, telling me that I should consider it an honor to have been brought to the School, as only officers with the rank of First Lieutenant come to School. As a Second Lieutenant I was expected to compensate for my short years of service with extra effort. He added that this distinction implied that I was expected to increase my military knowledge to reach the level of the other officers in the School. Almost all of them had finished their Lieutenant's course and were about to be promoted to Captain. I replied that, for my part, I would do all I could so as to live up to his expectation, and should there be something that I did not understand I would consult with the teachers of the School I would study every subject fully, and would find means to overcome every obstacle in my way.

Apparently, the Colonel was pleased with my replies. Before I left his office, he asked me to wait for him and accompany him to a round through the stables. We then went there together.

To make this round, we had to cross the main square which was opposite the School. As we were doing so, a high school girl came up to us and asked for some money for a charity collection. The young lady greeted Colonel Barrios very affectionately and pinned a flag on his uniform. The Colonel put five pesos in the collection basket, which was a lot of money in those days, and added: "For the two of us". It was lucky that he did so, for when I changed I had left all my money in the other uniform. The young lady pinned the flag on me rather reluctantly, for she would have liked my contribution too, and promptly bade us goodbye. This girl was the same person I had spoken with on the telephone in Valparaíso, and who later would become my wife. After this meeting I did not see her again for a year.

The Colonel showed me the stables and the places where forage was stored and cattle were kept. He added I should have an electric torch with me when I was on duty to check the corners of that pavillion which had no electricity. Afterwards we walked back to the school where Major Julio Ibáñez, my old captain, was waiting for us. He was then teacher of Tactics in the Lieutenant course. He saluted the Colonel and I saluted him. When the Colonel went to his office he embraced me saying: "I am glad you have come to the School. Here you learn your profession fully while you are still a junior officer, or you fail, and that's the end of your career". I must confess I was not very pleased by this warning. He invited me to have lunch in his house, where I met again his wife whom I knew from Concepción. I spent a pleasant moment with them that I always remember as a happy encounter with a superior whom I appreciated as an elder brother and who was always my model as instructor. Next day I went to

visit the sub-Director, Lieutenant Colonel Luis Gómez, and then proceeded to the office of Major Sagüés who informed me I had been assigned to the First Company under the orders of Captain Raúl Gajardo. I spent the whole morning greeting the school officers, a very numerous group.

In the Company I was introduced to Lieutenant Alberto Aranda, the only officer in command of a section, to First Sergeant Humberto Caverlotti and to First Vice-Sergeant Arriaza who were the two non-commissioned officers in charge of the administrative part of the unit. Next, Captain Gajardo introduced me to the regular teachers of the School.

Together with these introductions I received the general instructions of the School, Batallion and Company. I found that my name was already down to give some lectures and to take part in the war games which would take place in the course of the year. That same afternoon Captain Gajardo took me to the Secretary of Studies to introduce me to the officers I had not yet met.

Later on that same officer authorized me to settle in the officers' quarters, which was where the bachelor officers lodged. President of the mess was Captain Luis Aguirre, commander of the Machine Gun Company, a nice person with whom I got on very well; in the course of time we became excellent friends.

I used those days to become acquainted with the different dependencies of the School. I had the pleasure to meet in the office of the Secretary of Studies with Major Luis Jerez whom I had known as a captain in the Military Academy when I served in that institute in 1935. He was a pleasant person with a strong military personality.

As I got to know the officers better, I realised they were all excellent comrades. Among them was Lieutenant Sergio Castillo Aránguiz who would be later Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

At the end of April we received the recruit contingent we would instruct that year. Practices of guidance and reception of the new conscripts were similar to those I had learnt in the same school and later in the Chacabuco and Maipo regiments, with the difference that the instructors and regular personnel were selected, without implying anything against the sub-officers of the bodies of troops, where I always found excellent men.

The captain assigned us the units by order of height. I received the First Section with 45 men, in formation of three rows of 15 men each which was being applied recently in the Infantry. These units previously consisted of eight men and the sections of three squadrons. The new dotation carried with it a change in the formation and in the voices of command. This meant we had to study anew everything concerning these subjects which, even though they seem simple, can cause confussion if badly applied.

During the first month, the instructor officers had to stay with the contingent from before reveille until after the retreat. This schedule was slightly ligther in June and July, the months before the review of recruits. The only one who had to stay from dawn to dusk was the officer on weekly duty, whereas the other two could leave at the end of their service at 6.30 p.m. and receive the report of their units at 6.45 a.m.

Rest was almost inexistent, because theoretical instruction was imparted after dinner, and in practice you had to miss the retreat every other day. Theoretical instruction was carried out by an off-duty officer, and nobody made the least comment about the hardships of service. Everyone did what he was meant to do, and carried it out fully.

I remember that first year I did not go anywhere after going off duty. The little time I could dispose of I used to prepare the instructions for the following day, to study the rulebook, read the work I was expected to comment, study the subjects of combat instruction and the rules of war games in which I would take part, or learn by heart the initial situation, because as the youngest officer I was usually expected to present it.

On Saturday afternoons we attended the pistol shooting practises. As we did not do too well in those excercises, we had special instruction on Sunday mornings.

Three times a week we had physical education and lessons in sabre fencing. Those who were fond of this discipline asked the teacher as a special favour to train us on Sunday morning. That year I took part in the national competition for third category fencers; I got a second place.

Pedro Aguirre Cerda

We had three war games, directed by the highest authorities of the School during that period. I was never exempt from repeating a task, or being assigned to a post, be it the command of a section of Fusiliers, Machine Guns or Mortars. The directors of the game always asked me one or two questions. I thank God for having been a friend and under the orders of Major Ibáñez, who was my best teacher in Tactics. This chief congratulated me at the end of the year, telling me that I was fit to command companies in any combat situation. I felt immensely flattered.

At the end of May we celebrated the anniversary of the Infantry School with the attendance of His Excellency the President of the Republic, Pedro Aguirre Cerda. The School Command was very happy because the grounds where the future Infantry School would be built had been delivered, and a model building made. The actual school changed very little from the original plan, and the model was very much like the present building.

After a lunch in the mess hall, the President went to look at the model and asked the Director who was the youngest officer, because he would be the one who would see the new unit in function. Colonel Barrios called me up and introduced me to the President saying:

"This is the youngest officer; he is the only Second Lieutenant we have in the School".

The President looked at me and asked:

— "What do you think about the project for a new School?"
— "Too small, Your Excellency. —I answered— In some years it will require more exercise fields and shooting ranges because the infantry school is the core of the Army and as such it needs space".

He looked at me and said: "You are right," while the sub Director Lieutenant Colonel Gómez nodded to me to withdraw. With the passing of the years I still consider that my opinion was not absurd, but on that occasion I felt hurt that a senior officer should have thought that my reply was "the rash remark of a Second Lieutenant".

Captain Aguirre, the President of the mess hall, was a bachelor and lived in the Officers' quarters. Whenever there was an opportunity he would invite me to have dinner with him at the San Bernardo Club where he met with other people of his age. We were very interested those days about the war in Europe. Our rooms were papered with maps of Europe and the East upon which we had marked the operations carried out at that moment. It was very interesting to listen at lunch or dinner time, to professional discussions about the war. They were truly brilliant classes as many of the officers were already members of the staff and teachers of Tactics, Strategy or History. There was much talk about the way Winston Churchill had taken up the direction of the war; previously he had been First Lord of the Admiralty and it was known he did not believe in making concessions. We also discussed the fall of the Maginot Line and the chances of the Allies after Dunkirk. At the end of our meals, two or three of us would gather in the room of an officer and continued our discussion until very late at night.

When the time for the Recruits Review arrived there was in the school a feeling of tension as if we were about to take an exam. The officers took great care to present their men in the best possible way. The Recruit Review was a ceremony carried out with the solemnity due to a sacred rite rather than a requisite established for the instruction period.

The presentation of the officers was reviewed first, then squad after squad were examined until finishing with the whole company. We passed reviews during a whole week without stopping a single day. The officers of the school met on Friday and made a critique of all that happened in the review. A record of this was left in the Batallion Order, and also in our service records, which were generally favourable for all of us.

At the end of the review period the captains gave a dinner for all the junior officers, which lasted until the late at night. Next day, Saturday, I was appointed by an order of the School to attend as flag bearer of the section at the funeral of a veteran of the War of the Pacific. The unit would be commanded by Lieutenant Héctor Rojas. That same order granted us leave of eight days for all the men, in turns of four days each. After the funeral Captain Gajardo told me I could take my leave. I asked permission to go to Valparaíso as I had not seen my parents for several months.

I spent those days with them in the new house they were about to buy in Viña, which I found very cosy and liked very much. Every day I would fetch my father from his office as we had done in days gone by, but now we would travel together to Viña del Mar.

The plans for the school was carried out punctually. In July after leave, the units started squad instruction, then we passed to the section period in August and culminated with a review the first days of September. We also began the preparation for the Great Military Parade in the Cousiño Park to celebrate the independence holidays.

The School contingent travelled by tram from San Bernardo to Santiago for the Military Parade on September 19th 1940. We had lunch in the Military Academy, and then went to the Cousiño Park. "The presentation was quite good, up to the standard of the School", commented some officers. After the presentation we went back to San Bernardo as we had come.

We started campaign training in the ravine of the Colorado river along the Maipo valley. This period was very interesting because of the numerous works and exercises carried out by the instruction Batallion. As I was the only second Lieutenant I had to take part in every exercise.

When the period of instruction came to an end, we returned to the Garrison in San Bernardo and set out on campaign again by mid November. A few days later my fellow lieutenants celebrated my 25th birthday with a gathering in the officers mess followed by a pleasant campaign dinner.

When we returned from campaign we came to mourn the death of our Sub-Director, Lieutenant Colonel Luis Gómez, who passed away on December 23th at the Military Hospital due to a badly treated appendicitis. I was very sorry about the death of this distinguished officer, a very valuable man, who was not only an outstanding teacher who gave excellent lectures, but was also an expert on Military History.

He was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Vicente Martínez Araneda, a very stern officer. He forced me to improve my knowledge of Spanish Grammar so as to write in "the Book of the Officer on Duty", in the most accurate and precise way. He corrected all the idiomatic mistakes in the book and returned it covered with red marks. We all took great pains to make the least number of errors, without much success as he always found several.

The end of the year passed very quickly, we were soon celebrating the beginning of 1941. We went on holidays for a month starting on January 1st. I spent those days in the house of my parents in Viña.

On that occasion, I took advantage of my holidays to go North in an Italian passenger ship, and went up to Arica. I returned from there in a tramp steamer, the "Mapocho", which stopped in every port along the coast. I thus had the opportunity of knowing the northern coast zone and making contact with my fellow officers who served in the coastal units. They made my stay very pleasant in those places where we stopped. I arrived to Valparaíso only three days before the end of my leave.

On February 1st, I turned up at the School. I continued in the First Company, a unit where a new officer had arrived, Lieutenant Fernando Lezaeta Castillo, a very agreeable person and an excellent comrade. With the passing of the years this same officer would hand me the command of the Regiment of Motorized Infantry N° 7 "Esmeralda" in Antofagasta.

As in previous years the unit prepared to receive the new contingent of recruits. Apart from that we had to prepare the administrative review of the School. It was the second time I witnessed this kind of control carried out by the Army whereby an inventory is taken of all the clothing, equipment, war material and items which have deteriorated, destroyed or been lost during the year. Being very interested, I asked Captain Gajardo to name me assistant to the officers in charge of the stores and war material, clothes, equipment and inventories. Thanks to this post I learnt how these reviews are carried out in practice.

We passed the administrative review without criticism, and we went into the period of preparation of the new contingent. At the same time I was receiving the 1941 course of Sub-lieutenants, among which I remember Harold Sievert Fonck, Sergio Arellano, Ciro Ibáñez, Luis Alvarado, Sergio Cadenasso, Jaime Oviedo, Juan Bardina, whose father I knew from Valparaíso and who was the best columnist in "Semana Internacional", Héctor Contador, Gabriel Molina, Hernán Topali, Enrique Bauzá and many others. As I was the youngest officer in the school they put their trust in me. I practically became their "confidant".

Miss Lucía Hiriart

Captain Aguirre invited me on several occasions to Santiago on Fridays or Saturdays. He invited me twice to have tea at La Moneda Palace. We entered by Morandé 80 and went into a great dining room opposite the staircase. On one occasion his uncle, President Aguirre Cerda, turned up. I stood up when he came in. Don Pedro greeted me kindly. Before leaving he asked about my parents and sent them his regards.

In September I was introduced to Miss Hiriart in the house of the Governor of San Bernardo. I started to go out with her in the afternoons when my duties allowed. Other times we would talk on the telephone, much to the annoyance of the other officers who asked me to talk less. This proved very difficult because our conversations always lasted over 20 minutes.

The officers began to tease me. As soon as I arrived in the dining room of the mess hall they would whisper: "Here comes the baby snatcher". But the remarks did not stop me from going out with the high school girl, and I used to accompany her home when she left school at 12.30.

Miss Hiriart was reprimanded twice by the headmistress of the school, who did not approve of my company. Once I was sold a ticket for a charity party of the school and then she tried to prevent me talking to her. My young lady friend told the headmistress that if her mother had said nothing about going out with me, who was she to prevent it!

At the beginning of October Lieutenant Colonel Vicente Martínez gave a lecture on the Spanish Civil War. It was the best talk I had heard in those years about that subject. He impressed me very much when he read the conversation between General Moscardó and his son before he was shot. The voice of Lieutenant Colonel Martínez broke at this point, and his eyes were bright with tears, transmitting his feelings to the audience which was deeply moved by the courage of both father and son.

I was sent in October to take a course on anti-aircraft guns together with Lieutenant René Sagredo. Later I would be his adjutant in the War Academy as auxiliary teacher of Geography and Geopolitics, and we became very good friends.

In mid-December we went on maneuvers to Peldehue. This period of instruction of major units was very interesting and useful because of the subjects treated and applied there. At the beginning of January the School took part in a night exercise of motorized transportation in Magirus trucks, from San Bernardo to Concón - Quintero. The Batallion under the command of Major Sagués headed the convoy on a Tuesday evening. The advance was made with the lights off, and everything went normal. However, after two hours we were fighting to keep awake, because the loud hum of the engines made us terribly sleepy. I put my head out of the

cabin window many times; I also wetted my hair to keep awake those eight hours. By daylight we were in Concón. The troops got off the trucks, the units moved and began an advance northwards towards Quintero which ended with a combat shooting. Later a bugle was called to gather the troops, and the units started to assemble in the place assigned by the Captains to make a critique of what we had done. I was rather far away from the unit when an officer came to tell me I was called by a Colonel. When I was before him he said:

- Lieutenant, I have been watching you, and I think you will be a good officer in the Military Academy. Would you like to be transferred there?

- I would be delighted, sir, but before making any decision I would like you to ask Colonel Barrios first to see if he authorizes me, because I cannot make any decision on my own.

- I like your answer. I want you to know I will speak with Barrios immediately, and I dont think he will make any objections.

He then added:

- I see you are a Second Lieutenant. When are you going to be promoted?

– During these days, sir.

– Thank you —were his departing words.

Later I learnt that this seniors officer was Colonel Arnaldo Carrasco, Director of the Military Academy who would always take these opportunities to select the officers who would be assigned to the Academy as had happened to me.

Champagne and Promotion

Between the end of the year 1941 and the return to the school, we were given our holiday. I was to go out in January. I was invited by the parents of my future wife to spend some days in their farm "El Trapiche" between Talca and Constitución on the nothern border of the Maule river. I accepted happily the invitation and started preparing for the trip. One had to go to Talca, take a combination train to Constitución and get off in Tanguao. One then followed through an unpaved road towards the northwest and after 16 km reached the farmhouse. After a pleasant journey I arrived at the house of the Hiriart family where I was received with great affection. I spent ten very pleasant days there. I did not like milk but to be well in with the bride-to-be, I refused a glass of wine and instead I used to have a jug of milk at lunch and another one at dinner. My future fiancée and her mother were very happy. The former was not very tolerant as regards drink, and she had even joined the Anti-alcoholic League. Later, when I got married, I refused to keep on having milk for lunch and dinner. A few days before my return, I asked the father of my bride to spare me a few moments to talk about a situation concerning his daughter and myself.

Don Osvaldo was a pleasant man, very fond of jokes, and found nothing better than pretending to be deaf when I asked him for the hand of his daughter. After teasing me for a while he hugged me and told me he was very happy his daughter had chosen me, but that I should think it over seriously.

At dinner time we toasted to our happiness with a glass of champagne. The attitude of my father-in-law towards his family endeared him to all. He did not like to talk about politics. As he was Senator for Tarapacá and Antofagasta we used to talk about the north, a region which always attracted me very much, and that I knew well thanks to my studies. My future wife had been born in Antofagasta, but had come to Santiago with her family, and had not returned since then.

Fate brought me closer to my bride when her parents decided to move to Santiago in December to a residence in Providencia near Canal San Carlos. Now with my possible assignment in the Academy we would be close again. I had already informed them of my honorable intentions.

My promotion to First Lieutenant appeared in the Official Bulletin of January 1941. I would continue in the Infantry School. I well remember the same day I was promoted, was on duty as service officer. Two of my comrades offered to take up the service in exchange, so that I could celebrate my promotion. I thanked them but I refused because I felt that, for an officer, duty must always come first. Once I finished my duty my fellow Lieutenants gave me a dinner in the officers' mess which was attended by many civilian friends.

The resolutions which transferred me from the Infantry School to the Military Academy was dated February 15th. Three days later the officer corps of the School gave a farewell lunch for the officers who had been transferred. I received as a memento the figure of a soldier throwing a grenade, with a plaque which recorded the time I had been in that Institute. A new stage in my military career was beginning.

CHAPTER IV
Wearing the black patches of the Military Academy

My first year as instructor

To arrive to the Military Academy as an instructor was like meeting again an old friend; each corner of that old building brought back memories of the years spent there. The first days I walked through the classrooms, laboratories, bedrooms and dining rooms. I walked up and down the worn stone steps. I missed the teachers, some of whom were no longer there. Nostalgia made me go to back to the past with all the good and bad left inside me. Old Military Academy, how much does the Army owe you for the formation of its officers! One feels proud to belong to your ranks and to lead the simple life of the military man.

On my return from holidays I went to Valparaíso to be with my parents, and then went back to the Infantry School the last week of February to say good bye before moving from San Bernardo to Santiago. I used the fastest way of transport of those days, the omnibus. In Avenida Matta I took the N° 33 tram which left me at the school door. I had brought my luggage in a van I hired in San Bernardo.

In the Academy I presented myself to the officer on duty as there still were many officers on holidays. I was assigned a bedroom in the officers quarters which was in the east corner of the second yard quadrangle the officers mess and the Cousiño Park. That same day I sent my uniforms to the tailor to change the braids and patches which were as now yellow and black. A soldier came soon to prepare my room. The other newly assigned officers were also assigned their bedrooms.

I met there my old classmates: Juan Costa, my comrade from the Chacabuco Regiment, who had come from the Pudeto Regiment in Punta Arenas, Maximiliano Roessler from the Air Force Academy where he was cadet instructor, and others. Among the senior officers, Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Casanova, whom I had known as head teacher of the Sub-Lieutenants' course in the Infantry School, was Sub-Director. Adjutant to the Sub-Director was Lieutenant Donald MacLean whom I had known as Sub-Lieutenant in the Infantry School. I also met my old childhood friend from Valparaíso Lieutenant Arturo Le Blanc with whom we embraced.

Next day I was assigned to the Second Company of cadets under the command of Captain Eduardo Carrasco, a distinguished officer I had known as Instruction Lieutenant when I was a cadet; as fellow officers in the Company I met Lieutenants Carlos Kohler, Kurt von Hagen and Maximiliano Roessler. By mid March I was assigned to the Second Section of recruit cadets, and a group of men, all still very young, was left under my responsibility. All of them, with the exception of the student Brigadiers, formed the fourth year B, and shared the same room where I had been three years as a cadet. The instruction of the recruits slowed down its rhythm of activities once classes began, but according to the Colonel-Director, the officers remained responsible for their boys. We had to be present in the study councils of teachers and officers which he chaired. We also had to attend to at least two hours of classes every day to learn how these young men were doing. Junior officers lived in function of their cadets. The activities finished in practice at retreat time, except when you were on duty, then you continued working until an hour after the retreat, and when some cadet wanted to study after that time you had to see that he retired to his room before turning in yourself.

On Sundays when I was not on week duty or service I went to see my fiancée. We attended mass together, had lunch in her house and in the afternoon went out with her family for a drive. We enjoyed a simple and homely happiness. Her parents made my life as officer and future son-in-law very pleasant during that first year in the Military Academy.

I had to present the Section under my command in the review of recruits. I passed the test fairly well, as was mentioned by the Colonel Director during the critique made later. The study councils were easy because the average grades of the students under my charge were higher than those of the other fourth years.

In July we had two weeks of holiday. Officers had one week by turns. I used those days to visit the furniture shops and buy the essential things to set up a house.

Echoes of the European War

My father was very happy when he learnt of my intention to get married. He proposed to help me with money to buy the furniture. As I did not accept, he then offered me a commission according to the amount I collected for him from his clients in Santiago. It was a job I could easily do in my spare time and which would add up to more than my salary in the Army.

But everything does not always come out right. On August 31st 1942 my father's name appeared on the "black list" in the Santiago press, for having clients who were not on the side of the Allies. The "black list", as it was called by the Allies, was intended to boycott and disqualify a company or a person when he had as a customer someone on the side of the Germans, Italians or Japaneses. The person thus listed was treated as if he had the plague. If an employer gave work to anybody in the "black list" he was also included in it.

That unfair form of sanction harmed my father enormously. To attend some obligations he had to eat up his savings and sell some properties within a short time. I went to talk with the British Ambassador several times on behalf of my father. That gentleman sent me to talk to the American Ambassador who, in turn, sent me back to the British Ambassador. My insistence and the support of an Englishman, one of my father's in laws, made it possible to put an end to this injustice after suffering for almost a year.

When he was removed from that list he was able to start working again, but everything had become more difficult. There had been a loss of trust, some clients had found better service elsewhere, there was less capital available; in short, it was a complete disaster. The damage had been done, and to return to normal work he had to restart his activities from scratch. Only after six months was he able to recover the majority of his clients.

As far as I was concerned, I was left without the support of my father and without the commission for the collections he had promised. Thanks to my savings I managed, and was able to buy the furniture for the drawing room, dining-room, studio, bedroom and kitchen. I was also able to make a down payment for a small house in Ñuñoa.

My father never recovered the position which he had previously, nor the comfort he had enjoyed before he was included in the "black list".

Engagement

I asked my parents to ask for the hand of my fiancée in July. It was a very simple ceremony. However I wore evening dress to give solemnity to such important step in the life of a man. Our parents met on that occasion, and

I gave the engagement ring to my fiancée. We agreed to celebrate the wedding in January 1943. The exact day would be fixed later.

My activities proceeded as usual during the rest of the year. The Grand Military Parade in September proceeded normally and the presentation of the Military Academy before the authorities was faultless. After the parade, the Academy went on leave until October 1st. Then came the period of exams which proved a success; all the cadets under my responsibility passed their tests without any problem.

In November, the Academy went South on campaign to Contulmo. Once when we were to have combat shooting, I had an accident which did not have more serious consequences thanks to the prompt action taken. For this I have to thank the lesson I was given on the subject by Major Ibáñez: "When you are dealing with inexperienced men every precaution must be taken concerning targets and dugouts for shooters to lie in. You must prepare them the day before and if possible go through them with your men. Ammunition must be delivered to the same place where the shooting exercise will be carried out". Applying these teachings I issued a brief section order and read it out to the cadets two or three times.

The shooting exercise started next day, all precautions were taken and the order was duly carried out. I was correcting a cadet when I heard a shot and a scream. What had happened? The cadet in charge of ammunition was receiving the empty cartridges of the shooters who had finished their lesson. He found among the cartridges an unexploded percussion cap, in other words, a whole bullet. Without thinking twice about it and acting irresponsibly, this boy had taken the cartridge, showed it to his comrades and loaded the rifle. His classmates asked him to stop the joke, but he continued. Among those present was the son of the Peruvian Air Force Attaché whom he also threatened. Finally he pulled the trigger and to the horror of everybody the shot went off and hurt a cadet.

I was about 40 meters away separated by a barbed wire fence. I do not know how I jumped it and came to the side of cadet Coxhead who had been wounded in the armpit from which blood was flowing profusely. A tourniquet was made and within seconds he was taken to the infirmary, where he was assisted immediately by the surgeon of the Academy. The wound was deep; the bullet had produced an internal explosion in the armpit and bones had been broken.

The Director of the Academy, in view of the circumstances, ordered an investigation during which all the preventive measures taken before and after the exercise were put in evidence. The Colonel-Director found them very sensible. That cleared up my responsibility. The guilty cadet was dismissed from the school next day. I was terribly upset about the whole incident, but there are some things you cannot foresee.

Bachelor's Party, Marriage and First Days of Married Life

I went out on holidays in the second turn during February. I made good use of the month of January to prepare all the necessary formalities required those years to get married.

On January 28th my fellow officers gave me a bachelor's party in the messhall of the Military Academy. It was a very enjoyable party during which my comrades gave me a lovely wedding present and expressed their affection towards me. I got married on the following day in the Civil Registry. Our parents and Major General Alfredo Portales Mourgues acted as witnesses. The religious ceremony took place on January 30th in the Sacred Heart Church of Avenida Bernardo O'Higgins. We were married by my old teacher, bishop Augusto Salinas, whom we thanked for his good offices.

For our honeymoon we intended to go to Buenos Aires and from there to Punta del Este. However, when Chile broke relations with the Axis countries, I was left with our tickets ready to travel, as all leaves to go abroad were cancelled and the Army kept its men in their respective garrisons. The permission had been granted October 29th 1942. Instead we went for our honeymoon to a small bungalow in Quilpué. We stayed ten days in that place; we used to walk in the afternoons and make plans about our future. We talked also about the new house I would buy sometime, the place where we would like most to live, and so many other things which a newly married couple dreams about during those first days.

After these ten days we moved to Viña del Mar for a couple of days to an apartment in the house of my parents. Some presents had been sent there so we packed them and sent them to Santiago. Then we travelled to Talca and from there to Tanguao, to stay a few days there before the end of my holidays. As we had to spend the night in Talca my wife suggested to go to a very good boarding house where her family had stayed when they traveled to Tanguao. We decided to do so and arrived at the boarding house. The owner, a Spaniard, asked for my marriage license when we asked for a room. I did not remember where I had kept it what with so much travel from one place to another. He told me the girl, meaning my wife, had come the last time with her parents and they had said nothing about marriage. As time passed and we could not clear up the matter, I got annoyed and we decided to go elsewhere. Just at that moment, the Spaniard's wife came with a newspaper cutting where our marriage was announced, and only then did he accept to give us a room.

The following morning before eight o'clock we boarded the train from Talca to Constitución and descended in Tanguao Station from where we continued on horseback to the farm of my father-in-law in Trapiche, where her parents were waiting. We spent eight very happy days there. We used

to ride with a group of people to the coast or to a lovely place in the Trapiche hill to which the farm owed its name. In one of those outings my wife felt sick with the movement of the wagon but which everyone attributed to another cause. Those charming days came to an end, and we prepared to return to Santiago. The trip from Trapiche to Tanguao Station was made again on horseback. We had to start at 4.30 a.m. to arrive before seven to take the train to Talca. My poor wife accepted the sacrifice with joy.

We returned to Santiago, and while the rest of the family was still on holidays, we stayed in the house of my in laws. During those days we started looking for an apartment or a small house to rent near the Academy. This was urgent because I had to travel to the Academy everyday by tram which took almost an hour, and another hour to go back. My mother-in-law told us not to rush because we could end up with something unsuitable. For my part, I believed that "he who marries needs a house" and continued looking for something decent and within a reasonable price. My wife and I avidly scanned the advertisement section and we were permanently visiting the state agents, without success as the houses or flats were beyond the means of an officer or too modest.

At the beginning of the 1943 academic and military year I was assigned to the First Company of cadets, whose Captain, Donald MacLean, I had had the pleasure of knowing in the Infantry School when he was Sub-Lieutenant. This officer, a true gentleman of extreme courtesy, distributed the sections. I received the Second Section of cadets with more than one year in the Academy who had been pupils of my classmate Juan Costa.

The year started like the previous ones. Military activity was intense as regards the preparation of old cadets to serve as instructors of recruits. This period ended with the beginning of classes. The class I had now was not as good as the one of the previous year. There were some outstanding cadets but also mediocre ones. I attended to almost every class so as to keep a better control of the cadets and to see their progress. I also controlled them during the study period and more than once I was forced to leave some of them on Sunday with a special study period.

The week I was on duty in the Company was exhausting, I had to get up daily at four a.m. to take the tram which departed at five and arrived at Alameda corner of Dieciocho Street at 5.30. This was the schedule I set myself, to arrive at the Academy 15 minutes before reveille. I was never late. In the afternoon I finished at 7 p.m. and arrived at my house for dinner just before 8.30. These hardships forced us keep on looking for a house near the school. My wife went out looking every day, but with no results.

Father for the first time

It was only in June that we found a modest apartment in Las Heras Street, almost at the corner of Dieciocho Street which has disappeared today due to urban progress. Our happiness was enormous; we furnished it quickly so as to occupy it as soon as possible. During those days my wife announced that she was expecting a child, and the news filled me with joy. It meant the coming of a new life which would prolong ours.

After my work in the Academy I would spend my evenings in the apartment. I remember the works I had been assigned according to the general instruction were peaceably carried out with my wife beside me.

National holidays, the Academy presentation, the officers and teachers meetings, and the campaign to Pucón made time go fast. As regards my private life, I was very worried about the birth of my first child because the date of its expected arrival coincided with the field exercises in Pucón. According to the doctors it was expected to arrive at the end of October, before the trip. Faced with that problem I asked the doctor at the Academy who was the best doctor to attend on my wife, thinking of the possibility of my absence.

In order to receive the economic assistance given to the officers, I registered my wife in the Maternity Department of the Army. This caused a problem because she would have to be attended by one of the service doctors and I had requested the services of Doctor Mayorga. However, this situation was later solved.

The Academy was to go on campaign from November 20th to December 15th. To avoid any problem I took all the measures that I considered necessary so that if our child should arrive during those days, he should be attended by Doctor Mayorga in El Salvador Hospital.

When we were ready to depart, I was called one morning by the Colonel-Director, Arnaldo Carrasco, who told me that he was aware of the situation concerning my wife, and had decided that I would not go on campaign but would stay in Santiago carrying out certain duties he would assign me. I thanked him warmly for his thoughtfulness, and he waived aside my objections but insisted that I remain in Santiago to receive my first child.

The school went south on campaign; I stayed together with other officers in the Garrison. One of the duties assigned by the Colonel was to give marching instruction to the Red Cross personnel. This training lasted three weeks, and for this I counted on the help of a group of musicians. He also made me review the general stores and gave me other very light jobs. Days passed and the baby had not arrived yet. I was very worried because I had stayed in Santiago to receive my child before the return of the Academy and not after. Only three days before the return my wife had labor pains. I took her to the hospital where I had again the problem of duality, on one side

she should be attended by Doctor Mayorga and in conformity with the rules the military doctor had to attend her. When I explained this situation to the latter he left me in complete freedom to be attended by a private doctor. My eldest daughter was born December 14th. Mother and child were in perfect conditions, several doctors of the Military Health Department who examined them declared everything was normal. I must confess I didn't even know how to hold such a delicate creature, she had dark hair and smooth red skin. I caressed her tenderly, even more after having witnessed the sufferings of labor. One enters life surrounded by pain and blood. I think that, since that day, I loved my mother more, and had more consideration for my wife. Women give us life and they do it with suffering, mitigated by the immense satisfaction of being mothers.

My daughter was born just the day before the return of the Academy. I was congratulated by Captain MacLean, my fellow officers and afterwards by the superiors of the Academy.

The year was finishing: we had the final review and then our holidays. Everything went smoothly, and in February we went to Talca on vacation. That year we went to Trapiche taking a third class road by way of Pencahue. We arrived at the brook on the northern side of the farm and left the car in a shed, walking from there to the big wooden house newly built by my father-in-law where we settled down. There we spent some very pleasant days with my wife and daughter. We would take long walks, ride to Trapiche Hill or take a swim in the brook.

Every holiday period, I decided on a subject for study during those days. One year I studied the rivers of Chile with their characteristics and tributaries, and another year it was the Chilean transport system. That year I had resolved to study the great captains in history. I took several books and notebooks with references which I obtained from the library in the Academy. The subject was too vast to be tackled in one summer, and I had to leave part of it for the following year.

Twice we took trips to the coast and to Constitución. Days passed quickly. The holidays were over without our noticing it.

We went back to our apartment in Santiago and I returned to the Academy. I presented myself to Captain MacLean who informed me that I was to be adjutant to the military course under the orders of Major Horacio Arce. He was a gentlemanly officer, intelligent, quick-witted and decisive, in short, a person under whose orders it was a pleasure to work. That same day I presented myself to Major Arce who received me kindly and explained to me how the heads of classes would be working that year and the rules which would be applied. I then accompained him in a round through the different dependencies during which he made a series of practical observations. I remember he told me; "When you arrive at a barracks or to any other place, you must take the first review with a critical

eye and take note of what you see because later you will become familiar with what you see and changes will pass unnoticed". This is quite true, and I have never forgotten this advice.

The academic year of the military course developed normally. Soon came September when I was selected to be the standard bearer of the Academy. I felt very flattered with such a designation. During that month we also had some riding competitions in which I took part. I did fairly well, and was very pleased because my wife and daughter were watching.

My daughter Lucía had been christened in June in a simple ceremony at San Ignacio Church. Her godparents were my parents-in-law. There was no party, even though my father-in-law was then Minister of Interior, but we did not want to change our style of living which was very sober.

In October my father informed me that he would travel together with my mother and sister María Teresa to La Paz, where my sister Avelina lived. She was married to Rafael Saavedra Bustillos, son of the former President of Bolivia, Bautista Saavedra. A daughter had been born of this marriage, and my father was to be her godfather.

As the date of their journey coincided with the campaign outing of the military course which meant that I would be away from town, I decided to go to Valparaíso to bid my parents good bye and wish them *bon voyage*. It was to be the last time I saw my father alive. He was very happy and extremely affectionate with me. He talked about my wife and daughter, and sent them his fond regards.

The death of my father

Something strange happened before returning to Santiago on that occasion. My father had accompanied me to the railway station and before boarding the train he gave me the keys of the safe in his office. It seemed strange to me as the journey was to last only ten days, and I asked him why was he giving them to me. He answered that when you travel many things may occur and it is not a bad thing to take precautions.

We bade each other good bye at the station, and I returned to Santiago in the afternoon express. As soon as I arrived I started preparing my equipment.

Next day we started out on a campaign outing at 6.30 a.m. After a light march we arrived at a place in La Florida where we would set up the camp. It was a spot with plenty of grass, where we installed the tents. We worked the whole of the following day in combat instruction, and we went to bed exhausted.

We continued with combat work in the field on the following day. In the afternoon a courier brought a communication for me. My father was seriously ill, and would have to be brought down from La Paz to Arica.

It was November 13th 1944. I received at the same time a peremptory order from Lieutenant-Colonel Hector Sagués to return to the Academy at once.

Very worried, I showed the telegram to Major Arce who ordered me to return immediately. When I arrived at the Academy, Lieutenant-Colonel Sagués had obtained for me a place as route officer in a Panagra flight which would allow me to travel to Arica the following day. My father-in-law, in turn, had asked the Governor of Arica to grant me every facility.

I arrived at the airport of Arica at midday of November 14th. I went to the railway station where I was informed my father was coming in a track car, which was expected to arrive at about 18 hrs. In the meantime the doctor of the Regiment, doctor Garibaldi and my friend Lieutenant Carlos Elbo had made arrangements to get an ambulance and a bed in the Juan Noé Hospital.

My father arrived about 18.30 accompanied by my mother and sister María Teresa. He was given all possible care but doctor Garibaldi called me aside and took away all my hopes when he said: "Only a miracle can save your father for they got it all wrong in La Paz; he was poisoned with something we shall find out, but there he was treated for mountain sickness, and instead of giving him serum they bled him". Effectively, my father had arrived in a state of coma. We knew he was alive because of his breathing. We all expected the end. He died that night. He who was always an active man and never took more than two or three days of rest had come to die now in Arica, when he had decided to take a short holiday whose results had been disastrous.

I was looking at him when he stopped breathing. I told my mother he had passed away, because I felt a strange sensation within me. His death was confirmed later by the doctor.

While we were in the hospital that afternoon, a Junker plane arrived to fetch us by special request of General Alfredo Portales to the Air Force Commander, but it was already too late, and, besides, it was not possible to take him to Santiago due to the impossibility of getting the coffin inside the plane because of the shape of the fuselage. We decided to send his remains by ship. For this purpose the body was embalmed and prepared for sending. My mother, my sister and I travelled in the same ship to accompany his remains.

I have always been very grateful to my friend and classmate Carlos Elbo for his concern in solving all the problems which arose, and also to his father-in-law, Juan Worn, who as Customs Agent in Arica took care of the shipment of the remains to Valparaíso.

The ship left the harbor on a Tuesday. After sailing south for eight days we arrived at our destination. The remains were taken to the Church of the Sacred Heart, and from there were sent to Santiago where they were buried in the General Cemetery.

As he was a fireman of the 10th Company of Santiago he received the corresponding funeral honours. The speeches emphasized his virtues. His heroic behaviour during the fire in Pasaje Ross when he saved two lives at the risk of his own —and to which I have referred before—, was also mentioned. It was the first time the family heard of this. His modesty and sobriety had not allowed him to talk about it.

The officers who had accompanied me during the funeral, informed me that the Academy would go on the following day on campaign to Pichilemu, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Sagués. After the funeral, I got in touch with the Military Academy that same day, and presented myself to him.

This officer, reputed for his severity was, however, a kind-hearted man. Besides expressing his sympathy, he told me I could dispose of all the days I needed to arrange the matters my father had left pending. I really needed them because the key he had left with me I had sent by plane to my brother who in turn had handed it over to another person. I felt sure that the safe had been opened without any witnesses and I was right. But it was also necessary to solve various matters, especially with the banks.

I asked advice of a friend, and we tried to arrange his financial matters in the best way possible, asking the banks for additional time to repay debts due. It took about a fortnight to get the office back to normal. When I finished I returned to the Academy which was still in Pichilemu. To get to the camp I travelled from Santiago to Alcones, where I got a horse to continue the journey in the afternoon and reach the camp by night.

The Academy returned to Santiago by train. We used the remaining days to prepare the final review in the main courtyard. In that presentation the gymnastic exercises with apparatus, attracted the attention of the public, and were a great success.

That year my wife, daughter and myself travelled to Trapiche for the last time, my daughter was fourteen months old. We made the trip by car taking the Pencahue-Corinto road, and arrived at the same place as the previous year. We spent those holidays in family outings, which were so pleasant I did not notice how the month had passed. My family stayed there ten more days to make good use of the remaining holidays, while I returned by train at the end of my leave.

On the next day, when I turned up at the Academy, I found some important news. The Colonel-Director was to be replaced by Colonel Ramón Alvarez Goldsack. Major Horacio Arce was assigned to Paraguay as Military Attaché and had been replaced by Major Adrián Barrientos Villalobos. I immediately presented myself to Major Barrientos, and told him that if he had anyone in mind for my post, I had no objection to any changes. He rejected the offer, and told me that I had his full confidence and that I was to continue working with him.

A few days later, and feeling rather sad, I went to Mapocho Station to say good-bye to my well-loved Major Horacio Arce on his way to Paraguay as Military Attaché.

Reaching the rank of Captain

The year started as the previous ones. The routine was practically the same. The reception of the Sub-Lieutenants was made in perfect order. I found among them many who had been my pupils.

Major Barrientos was a pleasant officer, an outstanding professional, a gentleman with great aptitudes for commanding. He soon replaced Major Arce on equal terms. As a good artillery man he was permanently concerned about the Sub-Lieutenants. I never heard an improper word from him, and he always was a "spiritual" father to his pupils. Years have passed and when I talk with the former Sub-Lieutenants from that period, they all fondly remember this distinguished officer.

The Academy of Officers was quite demanding: classes, lectures, commentary of books and war games. Twice a week in the mornings, from 9.30 to 11.30, we had physical training, swimming and fencing. Once, when I was practicing fencing with another officer, he made a thrust I could not parry and the saber pierced the grille of the mask. If I had not instinctively put my head down I would have lost an eye, or something worse could have happened. Luckily I only got a slight scratch in the left side of my face. The master of arms and my contender were stunned, and later the male nurse cured the scratch, which could have been far more serious.

The year brought some changes to the Academy. For instance, a milk-bar was opened for the cadets of the school. This was a great improvement as regards hygiene, because until then the soldiers in charge of the cleaning used to sell candies at astronomic prices to the cadets, who being always hungry, would buy anything. The serious part of it all was that the soldiers would hide the candies or sandwiches from the officers on duty in the dustbins. An end was also put to the practice of the barber, who would sell cakes which he kept in dirty drawers. When someone would not buy his wares, he would ask: "How do you want your haircut, *a la* Richard or *a la* Poblete?", using the slang terms for rich or poor. It was a way to find out if he would receive a tip or not. If you tipped, hair was left three fingers long; if you did not, it was cut to the length of a finger. If the cadet deceived him, the following time his hair would be cut to half a finger, that is to say, half a centimeter long. That is why everyone said Richard, and no one dared to denounce him for fear of reprisals. Another novelty established by the new Director was the social balls from 18 to 21 hrs. in the great hall. According to the captains in command of companies, they

were meant to make the young men more sociable, but we soon noticed the officers were also present in droves, to take care of their cadets and of the ladies.

The schedule of lectures, summaries of books and war games was rigurously fulfilled. What we liked most was the critique of the Colonel-Director, whose intervention was sometimes longer than the lecture itself, and showed a breadth of knowledge, that made the officers admire him. I talked that year about the battle of Stalingrad, a subject which obliged me to look up references everywhere, but my efforts were rewarded with a good qualification from the Colonel-Director. His comments were very interesting.

Thus we arrived once more to the National Holidays in September, when I was again appointed standard bearer, which meant a great honour for me.

Time passed quickly. The military course went to spend its instruction period in "Tejas Verdes" in November. We had been there for about a week carrying out the instruction of the different weapons, when one morning our Colonel-Director, Ramón Alvarez Goldsack, turned up with his adjutant. He observed first the instruction of the senior cadets, and then, at about one o'clock, he had lunch with the senior officers, captains and adjutants. I remember that meeting with pleasure. The Colonel- Director kept up a very fluid conversation on various current topics, which he dealt with in depth. I especially remember his analysis on the possible consequences of the Second World War.

In spite of the pleasant time, there was a strange feeling in the air. At tea time a group of officers began to talk about the tense relations between the Minister of Defense and the Colonel-Director, and the possible result of this state of affairs. It was known that Minister Carrasco was indignant about the changes which Colonel Alvarez had introduced in the Academy, and which he rejected absolutely. Harsh notes had been exchanged on the matter.

That evening, when the military course was forming before retreat, and the band was calling for the gathering of the troops, a courier from Santiago arrived at the camp with a document ordering the Academy to return immediately to Santiago because of the change of Director. Our fears and bad omens seemed to come true, especially as the President of the Republic, who was meant to be a friend of the Colonel-Director, was in the United States and General Carrasco had all the power in his hands.

As soon as we received the order we lifted camp that same night and began our return from "Tejas Verdes" to Santiago where we arrived about 5 o'clock in the morning. After we had unharnessed and left everything in order, the students were given a rest until 9.00 a.m. An hour later we started the preparation for the change of command of the Academy whereby Colonel Alvarez would hand over to Colonel Walton Ojeda.

The Academy formed, the ministerial order was read and the change of command was carried out normally. An economic review was set up at once by an ad-hoc commission, which turned up no irregularities. On the contrary the accounts showed a surplus. Colonel Alvarez was assigned to the Fifth Division of the Army in Punta Arenas, under the command of General Miguel Puga, who had been my first Commander in the Infantry Regiment N° 6 Chacabuco. Now, on his return from Brazil where he had been Military Attaché, he had been promoted to Brigadier General and commanded that unit.

The Sub-Director, Lieutenant-Colonel Eduardo Yáñez Zavala, also left the Academy, and was assigned to the Fourth Division quartered in Valdivia. On our part, a breach of discipline was committed when many officers, senior cadets and cadets went to see the Sub-Director off to the Central Station.

A few days later the President of the Republic, Juan Antonio Ríos, returned to the country. When the plane landed in Arica General Carrasco was there to meet him, and they travelled together to Santiago. The officers of the Academy learnt later, in those talks where everybody pretends to know something and nobody knows a thing, that there existed a group of senior officer who intended to purge from the Army all mediocre officers. It purported to be an organization of a strictly military character, but it acted outside the regulations, the Councils of Generals and the officer qualification processes. This group called itself "Group of Selected Officers". It was rumored that its chief was a Colonel, probably Colonel Alvarez. During his command of the Academy, he never said anything which might imply such a purpose. His lectures had always dealt with professional matters. We were convinced that all this was a slander against our Colonel, as it proved to be.

Excitement was great during those days. None of the officers knew if they would continue in the Academy or if they would be assigned elsewhere. I resolved to go to the Direction of Personnel, and I talked there with one of the chiefs who informed me that according to his calculations I should be promoted in March 1946. I thought it was the opportunity to leave Academy, after all that had happened, and that the best thing would be for me to go away from Santiago. Likewise, I must also confess that I was feeling rather distressed and I did not wish to remain in the capital. My wish was to command a company in the North of Chile.

My son Augusto had been born in September. He suffered from a strange stomach fever as a result of which he had become very weak. We consulted many Army doctors who could not diagnose the cause of the illness. We then decided to consult some private specialists, whose fees were quite expensive, given our limited means. To pay, I had to spend all my reserves I then had, until, by what seemed a miracle, a simple and

very cheap vaccine, "anticoli croveri", practically cured him, even though his stomach remained weak.,

Before being promoted to Captain I asked to be assigned to the garrison at Iquique. When March 1946 arrived and my promotion to one of the most interesting grades of the career was published, I was already travelling to my new unit, Infantry Regiment N° 5 Carampangue.

I was very happy with my promotion to Captain. However the order stated that before moving on to my new assignment, I had to attend a Lieutenant course in the Infantry School of San Bernardo which would mean two transfers in a year with all the subsequent problems. I discussed this mattter with a Colonel who was very fond of me and who a few days later was promoted to General. I think he must have solved my problem without me having to ask him to do anything. However I stayed in the course for a month and a half. It was first postponed and later this requisite was considered fulfilled, because I had been promoted to Captain.

CHAPTER V

One of the most interesting ranks

The rank of captain has always been considered one of the most interesting in the military career. The officer comes with a good amount of military knowledge and general culture at a youthful age. He has the capacity to assume full responsibility for the disciplinary, administrative, judiciary aspects of the lives of his men and for their welfare.

Personally I never left my notebook in which I wrote down the experiences of my daily life, and many of these have served me as basis for these memoirs. I regret to have destroyed many of those notebooks. When I find one of those notebooks and read some lines, various remarks makes me laugh, but others leave me thoughtful and I start thinking about the ups and downs in the life of man.

As I have already said, on March 22nd 1946 I was promoted to Captain of the Army and assigned to the Lieutenant course in the Infantry School, while still attached to the Infantry Regiment N° 5 Carampangue. I attended the course only for a month and a half, and the High Command later considered that I had fulfilled the requisite having been promoted. I was then sent to Iquique as Captain of the aforementioned Regiment.

I suffered very much when I had to leave my dear wife, a girl still, and my two young children, because we decided I would travel alone to Iquique and find a house where to settle before the family arrived. To do this I hastened my journey and embarked on the ship "Toltén" which stopped in every port of the northern coast and took eight days from Valparaíso to Iquique.

In Iquique

We arrived in Iquique at dawn on a Sunday. Some officers and Major Fernando Dubreil were waiting for me. Two Lieutenants took care of my luggage and the rest took me to the officers quarters where I settled.

Iquique was a decaying but picturesque city. Most of its houses were made of wood, there was no electricity; water was scarce and the sewage system was in a terrible condition. The paving and sidewalks of the streets were broken. Whenever there was a fire, the disaster would normally destroy a block of buildings or more. I was there when the Chinese quarter caught fire and three blocks were burnt while the firemen watched helplessly.

On the day of my arrival I had lunch in the mess with a group of young officers who lived there. In the afternoon, I went out to reconnoiter the city and to supervise the disembarkment of my horse "Rex" which I had brought with me. I handed him to the mounted orderly and sent him to the barracks. That afternoon I went to visit don Guillermo Bonilla, to whom I had been recommended by my parents-in-law, and who was also the father of a fellow officer. He was a very good friend of don Osvaldo Hiriart, my-father-in-law, and received me as one of the family.

In the evening I left the house of the Bonilla family, and when I was walking along Baquedano Street I met my good friend Captain Humberto Aguirre who, as I said before, I had known from the Infantry School. He was now Commander of a Company in the Armoured Regiment stationed in Iquique. After greeting each other and talking while walking through the square we went to have dinner at the Iquique Club where we reminisced about the old Infantry School, our fellow officers and some situations we had witnessed during those years.

Next day I presented myself very early to the Commander of the Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Victor Beltramí, who received me affectionately and put me in command of the Sixth Company of Fusiliers, a post I would receive the following morning. I was also assigned Head of the Fishing Commitee, which disposed of a boat, nets, and four men, the fishermen. I noticed that this commitee always had a deficit and never provided any fish for the families of the men of the unit. After I put a man whom I trusted among the fishermen, the situation changed radically and there was plenty of fish for everybody.

On Tuesday I took over the command of the Sixth Company of Fusiliers and started to get acquainted with the problems of the unit which I gradually tackled and solved.

The Regiment took part in the great exercises in Ojos de San Pedro, south of Ollagüe in October. I was assigned chief officer in charge of the transportation an installation columns from where we would take food and

ammunition to the Regiment camped in Ojos de San Pedro. The installation to which I refer to was located in the Pintados railway station.

One night, one of the columns had two of its trucks with problems which obliged us to spend the night in Calama. The only place where we could stay was the guard house of the regiment, because the rest of the installations were closed due to the maneuvers. We did not have anything to eat; it was 1.30 a.m. and the temperature was two to three degrees below zero centigrade. I went out that night with some men in one of the trucks to look for a place where we could have something to eat. We were still searching when a car stopped us and a gentleman descended from it. He said he was the Mayor of Calama, Ernesto Meza Jeria. We explained him what had happened to us and he took us to an inn where they gave us plenty of food. When we wanted to pay, they did not accept our money saying it was courtesy of the Town Hall. Mr Meza later accompanied us back to the Regiment where we spent that night.

The following day when we inquired about the Mayor we were informed that he was a good man, that he was a communist leader and that he liked to attend military men.

At the end of October, the unit returned to Iquique. We went again on campaign to the Pintados salt flats in November. There was in that place an Experimental Farm. In this desert zone, water for irrigation was extracted from the subsoil, and was stored in a big tank. Great was my surprise when I found that the head engineer of that farm was my friend Crespo who had been at School with me in Quillota. He was delighted to see me and solved my problem of lodging. I met his family who had been living in that farm for over two years.

During those days we made a march to the oasis of Pica, a place that looked very near from Pintados. To arrive there, however, we marched about ten hours. We stayed in that place an returned the following morning to the camp in Pintados.

On November 25th the officers invited the Crespo family and two other engineers who lived there to a pleasant dinner to celebrate my birthday. This reunion was very moving for me because it was the first time since my marriage that I had spent a birthday far from my wife and children.

Nights were very cold in the salt flats. Due to this, we used to sleep half-dressed, and even so we shivered from the cold. At first the noise of the stones cracking from the cold kept us awake most of the night, but we soon got used to it and it no longer disturbed us.

We went back to Iquique in the first week of December. We had a few days rest which we used to go to the beach, doubtless one of the most beautiful in Chile because of its white sand, gentle slope and temperate waters.

Sunday mornings we went riding along the beach. We would meet in a small house which we called the Paperchase Club where they sold us "empanadas" –meat pies– and drinks. The officers of the various units met there to talk with the civilians who also went there to have a drink before lunch.

It was a custom to spend the afternoons in the beach. Even though I took all the necessary precautions, on the first day I got badly burnt by the scorching sun of Iquique. For several days nobody could touch my back due to the burns.

On September 4th 1946 Gabriel González Videla was elected President of the Republic. The election was held with no problems. We did not foresee any change for us; we considered that everything would remain very much as it was. It was multi-party government formed by liberals, radicals an communists.

I missed my family very much. This prompted me to intensify my search for a house, so as to have them with me as soon as possible, but it was only in mid-December that a Miss Aliaga, who owned three or four houses for rent, could pass on to me one which would be left by a Commander who had been assigned to Santiago. The house was quite a good one, so I rented it at once. The Commander who was occupying the place, agreed to put it at our disposal in January, when I would be coming with my family. I told my wife I had found a house and let her know I would travel to Santiago by the first available means of transport.

The coastal ship took seven days to Valparaíso whereas the longitudinal train –the "longino" as it was called– took only three days from Iquique to Santiago. The hardship and discomfort of the trip by rail were made up for by the additional days you had upon arrival. It was usual for the officers going to Santiago to travel in that train during those months. To take the train was a truly tactical operation. To keep a place you had to send somebody to sit there; you packed your clothes in suitcases and travelled dressed in overalls and gym shoes, carrying a basket of food for the three days. The journey started on a Monday. By the time we got to Pozo Almonte we knew all the people travelling in the car with us. The three days of journey were quite something. We arrived at the terminal dirty, unshaven, an stale. As soon as we arrived in La Calera we looked for a hotel where we took a room to use the bathroom. We shaved and cleaned ourselves, then we changed clothes and went back to the station. The overall and gym shoes were given to the first passer-by. We took the express train in the afternoon and arrived in Santiago dead tired.

Great was my happiness to find my wife and children quite well and preparing to travel to Iquique. The health of my son had improved considerably, but the doctor had forbidden him to eat starches and as the

medicine had produced the desired effect, we had to be careful and control his diet.

We prepared our household goods to be taken to the North. We carefully packed our glass and china in boxes; clothes were put in trunks and furniture was packed and sent in a truck to Valparaíso where an officer commissioned by the garrison took care of everything to be sent by ship.

It was mid-January when we and our belongins embarked on the "Toltén" for Iquique. In the ship we were given a cabin for the four us. The children were always under our watchful eye. Nevertheless, we decided to put on them a belt and a leash lest any of them should have the misfortune of falling into the sea.

The ship stopped in Coquimbo, Huasco, Caldera, Taltal and Antofagasta, In this port, Tiba Ponce de Ríos, a childhood friend of my wife, was waiting for us. She was married to Lieutenant Colonel Ríos who commanded the Infantry Regiment N° 7 "Esmeralda". As soon as the ship docked, we were taken to spend the day in their house. As they also had young children, our boy and girl had a lovely time that day. They took us back to the ship that afternoon and sailed for Tocopilla where arrived at dawn.

While we were having lunch in the Automobile Club of Antofagasta, we met an officer from the Carampangue Regiment who was travelling to Valparaíso. He gave us a bad piece of news. The Commander who was meant to hand over the house upon the agreed date had decided to stay on until February. This meant we would be without a place where to arrive and homeless for a month.

When we disembarked in Iquique, we found we had no place where to go. We went to every hotel and boarding house in town, but were not accepted anywhere because we had two young children. When we were about to lose hope and were thinking of asking permission to spend the night in the salon of the officer mess, the Second Commander, Major Fernando Dubreil offered to put us up in his house while we found a place. We accepted, delighted because, at least, we solved part of the problem. We stayed there for about eight days. They also had young children which quarreled with ours causing unpleasant friction. Finally my wife found a small house in the extreme end of the Punta del Morro, next to the power house. We took in immediately and we had it painted and arranged. Two days later, after thanking the Dubreil family warmly we settled in this new house. The first nights we were not able to sleep because of the noise of the generators which provided Iquique with electricity.

Meanwhile the Lieutenant Colonel who was meant to have handed over the house, assured us he would be travelling on February 25th, so we could count on the house from that date. We were very happy. The days of waiting seemed endless, until we finally received the house on

the appointed date. I immediately had the place painted, the floors scraped and made other arrangements to have the house ready before we moved in.

During the 35 days we lived in Puntilla del Morro we had some minor problems, as when my son found an aspirin tube and took the six aspirins left in it. This gave him a chill and we had to call the doctor who treated him with a stomach pump and wrapped him in plenty of clothes. This incident could have been fatal, but luckily we took the necessary measures on time.

Military life developed normally. My subordinate officers were very efficient. I would invite them to have lunch with us on Sundays together with my friend the lawyer Tomás Bonilla and his wife Lucy.

When we had been in the new house for about three months, my son was invited to a tea party. Nobody remembered he was not allowed to eat starches, and he, when he saw the forbidden foods, forgot every warning and stuffed himself with cakes and pastries. Nobody noticed anything unusual in him, only after midnight my wife found him strange. She took his temperature which marked 42 degrees centigrade. I went out immediately to fetch a pediatrician, who with very good will got up and came to our house where he found my son burning with fever. The doctor took him and put him in the tub full of cold water and forthwith he wrapped him in towels. He repeated the process several times; only after two hours did the child react and come back to normal. We will always be grateful for the services of that doctor.

I naturally wished to be a Staff Officer but as I had been exempted from the Lieutenant course I was afraid the seniors officers would believe that I was not able to fulfill that requisite. That is why I prepared myself a severe schedule of work which left me many times exhausted because I started at 19.00 and often finished after midnight.

In the mornings, the ordely came to fetch me at 5.30 with my horse Rex, who was delighted to be mounted. He only relaxed when I took him to the beach and made him trot for about twenty minutes. I was normally back by reveille, and left the dispatch ready for the day. After breakfast in the mess I would study for an hour in my office, according to my schedule. Those days in the Military Academy, when we usually talked about Chilean History between 10 and 12 with professor René del Villar, came in useful. Geography had been my hobby since I was a child. Thus, I was well advanced in two subjects for the entrance examination to the War Academy. I still had to master Combat Leadership and the method for evaluating tactical situations and topography.

In this last subject, I was relatively well prepared, because the lessons I received from my officer friends when I had to survey the Santiago-La Dormida-Limache road served me very well for making calculations and developing this subject. Therefore, to apply for the War Academy I had to

prepare two subjects, which were the most complicated of all: command leadership and combat and the methods employed to appreciate the situation when faced with a tactical situation.

To study these subjects I applied the system Major Ibáñez had taught me in the Infantry School, that is, not only to learn the subject by heart but also to interpret it, imagining that you are faced with a specific combat situation.

However as there was a shortage of officers, the new Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Jorge Zamorano Maturana, ordered me to take command of the Eighth Company of Machine Guns in March, and put me in charge of several administrative committees. When the new contingent arrived we carried out their instruction thoroughly. The knowledge acquired during all those years was fundamental for my activities. I also took great care to manage properly the administrative committees, especially the officers mess committee of which I was named President. I was short of time, but I never stopped studying at least three hours a day even though I was sometimes overcome by fatigue.

When I sent my application form to the War Academy I had still three months left to fulfill the basic unit command period, but the Commander pointed out that by the time I took the exam, I would have already fulfilled the required period.

However, as a consequence of my efforts to carry out all my obligations I was brought to a state of mental fatigue which forced me to maintain absolute rest for ten days. At the end of that period I returned to my usual duties though I still suffered from heavy headaches, which I concealed from my superiors lest they prevented me from taking the exams for the War Academy.

Burning the ships

Two weeks before leaving for Santiago I was almost completely recovered. My wife was then expecting our third child.

Four days before travelling, I saw the dining room furniture being removed. I asked my wife what was happening and she replied: "You will pass your exam and we shall stay in our house in Santiago; the money which we receive, will allow us to buy back all we have sold in Iquique". I did not want to argue, but I was in the same situation as Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of México, who burnt his boats. I had no alternative but to pass my exams and be admitted to the Academy. But the problem was not only passing the exams, but being among the twelve best.

Shortages

For some time Iquique was suffering from an almost total shortage of basic foods. In the mornings there were long queues in front of the shops, especially the bakeries. At first, these long queues of men, women and children would form before the shops during the day, but after a few weeks, they could be seen as from dawn. They also became increasingly longer, to the point that many people had to spend the whole night before the doors of the shop in order to get food. The anguish to get food was everyday more intense in the city, and was aggravated by hoarding on the part of some people. The advantage of a place in the queue began to be considered a form of gainful employment, that is to say; there were families who spent the whole night queuing and in the morning sold their place to the best bidder, thereby making an additional income.

I must clarify that the shortage of essential goods did not affect members of the Armed Forces residing in Iquique. The communists took good care to avoid any problem which could lead to a confrontation with the Army, the other military institutions or the police. In fact, I think the military personnel never had a better, cheaper and abundant supply of provisions than during those days.

For the rest of the population the shortage became worse day by day. I remember some friends who were happy when they could get a tin of cooking oil from a shopkeeper or some fresh bread from us. As we had the right to a kilo of military bread, my wife bartered the bread for fresh eggs with a friend who owned a poultry farm, thus benefitting both of them.

I think my wife, with her feminine intuition, was the person who most influenced my decision to return to Santiago. To take my family to Santiago I asked Colonel Horacio Arce to get tickets for us, which he did, and two days later we arrived at Quintero in a Catalina plane. We spent the night there in a hotel, and next morning we travelled on the Quintero-San Pedro railway and from there to Santiago where my parents-in-law were waiting for us.

During the 15 days left before the exam I dedicated my time to study under the coaching for Major Berty Walker, who left me very well prepared in methods of evaluation and in the knowledge of the Rules of Command and Leadership.

In Pursuit of a Ship

I took tests in the War Academy and did very well, but before knowing the results of the tests I had to travel back to Iquique. I had taken a government ticket, which I had been given for coming to Santiago, and booked on a ship departing on a Friday afternoon. On the Thursday I went round to

confirm the time of departure, and was very surprised when I was told the ship would leave that day at 17.00. It was 12.30 then; I had four hours to prepare my suitcase, travel to Valparaíso and embark in the ship which was practically impossible. However in a taxi rank near my house I engaged a driver who accepted to take me to Valparaíso at a reasonable price. I said goodbye to my wife and children and got in the taxi. It was 18.30 when we arrived at the port, and from the top of the hills I watched with anger and helplessness as the ship sailed off towards the north.

I quickly thought of asking for help in the Quintero Air Force Base, but the driver refused to take me there arguing he had to return the car by 21.00 p.m. or he would lose his job. I then resorted to my brother-in-law Ignacio who very kindly agreed to drive me to Quintero. I will not relate the adventures we had before we arrived at that resort, for the car suffered everything from a tire puncture to a leak in the radiator. Luckily a van passed by, and its driver took me to the Air Force Base. I had the luck to discover that the commander was a friend from the Military Academy, Major Yaniszewski, who told me he would send me with Lieutenant Tenorio in an instruction plane.

I continued, thus, in pursuit of the ship. The problem was now to catch up with the vessel and embark at Coquimbo, provided my berth had not been occupied. Fortunately all went well. I was able to arrive at Iquique on the date appointed by the Superiority, and carry out my orders as they been given.

A few days after my arrival, we were surprised by the promulgation of the Law of Extraordinary Powers, of 1947. This important piece of legislation, starting from the resolution to submit it to Congress until its application, had been enacted in absolute secret. I still remember vividly the surprise of those who believed themselves owners of the country, when, on that historical night of October 23th 1947, the state of emergency was decreed. I was called by the Regimental Commander, just before I was going home from the Unit. It was about 21.00. I went to his office where the senior officers and captains of the Regiment were gathered. We were asked about the operational state of the Companies, and then, very briefly, the Commander ordered us to prepare those units for a serious emergency, which he did not specify at that moment, nor did we dare ask because of our disciplinary formation.

Today, after so many years have passed, I can appreciate the speed at which the course the country was taking was changed. It was a night we should remember as a milestone in the history of Chile.

The motorized columns with the whole of their combat troop were ready about three o'clock in the morning. One of the restrictions we had to observe, insofar as possible, was not to take men whose relatives lived in the nitrate mines. Unfortunately in my basic unit most of the soldiers

came from those places. We reported that the columns were ready and were ordered to go at once inland to different places in the nitrate pampa. Just before leaving, we captains received the mission to go to certain specified places, arrest the communist agitators and transfer them to Pisagua.

Pisagua

My infantry unit received the order to go to the Humberstone Nitrate plant – or nitrate plant– and arrest numerous communists whom we knew well and a list of which had been prepared by the Civil Police. I remembered how on several occasions many of these individuals had shown arrogance towards the Army. The operation was very rapid and the detainees soon filled the military trucks, making it necessary to leave the less aggressive in the Police Station. We then started the transport of the detainees from that Nitrate plant to the port of Pisagua. I remember how those same arrogant, violent and rude agitators, dedicated to sowing hatred among Chileans, became quite different persons. They did not say a word; they were very scared and we had to calm down some of them.

As soon as we left the Humberstone Nitrate plant, we went northwards passing through Huara, Negreiros and Zapiga. While we were travelling everybody kept silence, which was only interrupted when we arrived at the port of Pisagua with the first light of day.

Our arrival produced an intense activity. The town was very peculiar. It looked like a movie studio set because the facades of the houses appeared to have a building behind them, but on closer inspection you noticed that the facades stood alone. All the rest of the buildings had been demolished and taken to other places.

As everything had happened so fast, the place was not prepared to receive more than 500 people. Thus it was necessary to set up a camp for the deportees, and then work out how to give them the logistic support for them to live there.

We worked intensely during three days to prepare the rooms where the relegates would live. After that I returned to Iquique. The Artillery Regiment of the Iquique garrison stayed in the camp at Pisagua taking care of security.

In January 1948 I was appointed head of the military forces in Pisagua. I arrived there at the beginning of the month with sixty men from my company and two officers. I came on that opportunity at the head of my men to relieve the troops who were there, and to assume the responsibility for the security and control of the port. I was rather displeased by this mission, because I had been accepted in the War Academy and was ready to travel to Santiago to be with my wife, who was expecting our third child.

I settled my forces in the old Pisagua Hospital, reconditioned as infirmary and barracks.

The port looked quite different form the one I had known when I transferred the deportees. I found barracks, dining-rooms, kitchens and bathrooms. Many of the deportees had arranged the houses and lived there with their wives if they wished to accompany them. However there were some who tried to create problems. The main difficulties were created by the communist women who provoked incidents so as to alter the state of order that should exist there for the good harmony of all. The majority of the women were of a certain age, very violent and extremely rash.

After I settled the military personnel I went to town to meet the deportees. Among the persons transferred there I found several personalities from Iquique and Calama whom I had the occasion to deal with several times before. Many of them had attained political prominence in the present government. Among them I found the ex-Mayor of Calama Ernesto Meza Jeria, a communist of many years standing and a permanent activist. He was the one who attended me in Calama on the night we arrived and did not have anything to eat. When I inquired about his behaviour I was informed that he was a very civil man who tried to solve any problem the military command could have.

On finding him in these new and so different circumstances, I went and said hello to him, and offered him some little comforts for his daily life within the limited resources we had in the port in those moments. He was delighted to accept and remained as a permanent guest of the mess hall on the condition not to talk politics, in which case he would lose all the facilities given.

The ex Intendant of Tarapacá, Angel Veas, was also there a character with great facility of speech, who had always shown special deference to the body of officers and the regular personnel of the Carampangue Regiment during the period in which the Communist party was in the government. I must say that this unit never faced a shortage of supplies; on the contrary, it received a special quota of flour, oil, foodstuffs and provisions. Any problem of food which any member of the unit could have was solved at once, and many times in excess.

One of the situations which impressed us most, happened a few days after the arrest of the communists, when we found some storehouses controlled by the Intendancy packed with boxes of canned foods, tins of oil, spaghetti and scores of other goods. I would witness the same situation years later during the government of the Popular Unity. It is evident that the control of food supplies is an easy way of forcing men into submission, and constitutes a basic principle of the communist tactics, as I have been able to confirm throughout the years.

I also found in that round another character I had known in Iquique, the tailor Pinto, a pleasant man, attentive and obliging, whose shop faced Prat square. I had already heard many comments about him in 1946, about how he had disappeared from the city in mid-1945 for about a year. Nobody had heard of him and it was said that during this period he had been taking a guerrilla course and improving his formation in Communist doctrine somewhere in Argentina.

I have always been used to write down in my notebook all the incidents which called my attention. Among them I find some worthy of being told. One of the first problems I had to face was with the communist ladies. It happened on the third day of my stay in Pisagua. Today, I think it was a sort of test to measure my reactions. To do this they refused food and spilled it on the floor, complaining that it was badly prepared. I should first explain that everybody, without exception, had the same food which was prepared in a community kitchen. Nobody had ever complained about this. In view of this reaction I called them together and warned them that the menu would not change during the whole week. If they did not want to eat, that would be their problem. Two days later nobody refused lunch, and the ladies decided to accept the food they were offered.

Another incident which could have had fatal consequences happened during a round at lunch time. I was carrying out this duty through the dining room of the deportees when, suddenly and as if under some orders, the people threw the food on the floor and started to beat the metal plates producing an infernal noise. I shouted "Halt" and reprimanded them harshly, and when I thought the incident was over, went towards the kitchen. I was there tasting the meal and to assure myself whether their refusal was justified or not, when I observed a group of those mutineers surrounding me silently to the point I was prevented from making any movement to escape. The situation was even more complicated because the troop that could help me was about 200 meters away without any possible eye contact due to a small hollow in the terrain.

To react violently would mean to be crushed by the crowd that would attack me savagely, even if the troop later repelled them with the utmost violence; if I decided to take out my service weapon I hastened the events and gave the mutineers reason to act as they seemed to want. I saw the possibility of jumping over the kitchen range and calling the troops but I was so closely surrounded that it was very difficult or impossible to say or do anything. The ring around me was getting tighter as time passed. Suddenly ex-Intendant Angel Veas saved the situation, and acting quickly he rebuked the crowd with very harsh words and ordered them to go back to their respective places in the dining room. Those harsh words stopped these individuals who seemed to be prepared to do anything. Veas then talked to them, urging them to depose their attitude and get on with their

lunch. I must say everybody without exception obeyed and there was no complaint or any word against what the ex-Intendant had ordered.

From this incident we can deduce the great influence of the communist leaders over the rank and file of the party, and the existence among them of an almost military discipline.

After this episode life in Pisagua went by without incidents and grew more monotonous each day.

I did not have any new problems similar to the one already narrated. However under this peaceful appearance an intense communist instruction was being carried out. Several times I caught the communist leaders giving lessons on Marxism. They denied it, alleging they were teaching their comrades how to write to their relatives. The students followed the game, putting letter paper on the table while pretending to be writing to their relations, when they were really analysing subjects which would prepare them as future labor agitators. I once gave an account of this situation to my superiors, and pointed out the Pisagua camp was being transformed into a true Marxist-Leninist University where people were being prepared to act as agitators later on. With that training and their commitment to the cause, they would be left in the best of conditions for future activity in labor centers.

Some time later we received an order from the Commander-in-Chief of the division to requisition all the Marxist literature in the hands of the deportees, and to carry out a severe control to prevent that academy from continuing. The order was carried out, and in the revision we found numerous books printed in Russia and teaching material which were requisitioned and sent to Iquique, but the control to prevent these classes from continuing was almost impossible, as the communists frequently changed the meeting places, reduced the size of the groups, pretended to play games and resorted to a thousand tricks to elude the control or evade any measure.

Another incident I remember because of the repercussions it could have had in future, was the arrival of a group of congressmen who came to visit the deportees. They turned up without any previous notice at the Alto Hospicio Police Station, where they were stopped by policemen. In that spot, situated just before the road slopes down to the port, a serious argument took place between the police and the congressmen among whom was Salvador Allende. They alleged that the purpose of their visit was "to come to see the conditions of the prisoners". At that moment I was the senior officer, for which reason I received a call from Alto Hospicio to my post of command. I told them that the Iquique authorities had not granted any permissions to pass. As they insisted they would pass even without authorization, I informed them that they would do so at their own risk. Allende never mentioned this incident, perhaps he attributed it to the

other General Pinochet, better known in the political circles by the events in El Salvador.

Life in a place like Pisagua was very monotonous, and one had to invent activities without neglecting security. The days passed slowly and the more relaxed hours were lunch and dinner time. At these times, I used to invite Mr. Angel Veas and the tailor Pinto together with Mr. Meza Jeria to the officers' mess, which was an old wooden house fitted up for such use. I set them, as only condition, not to talk about politics at table, just as I had done with Meza. However on many occasions I was obliged to ask them to change the subject of conversation, because they did not lose the opportunity to spread their ideas. In spite of this ban, they used to talk in a subtle way about subjects of general culture leading always towards Marxism.

I returned to the Iquique garrison on February 14th and travelled later to Santiago. My wife was about to give birth to our third child, a pretty girl.

I used those days to get ready to enter the War Academy where I proved to be the most junior officer of the course. The inaugural ceremony of the staff regular course 1948-1950 had the required solemnity. The words of the General-Director, Vicente Martínez, made us meditate about the obligations and responsibilities you acquire when you get that degree.

Classes began with great intensity and we regularly had tests with double coefficient known as "lightnings". I do not know the origin of that name, but I think it is due to the quick flash and noise produced later, which resembles the shooting of an artillery battery.

We had been settled only a few days when one Sunday after lunch my wife and I accompanied my father-in-law and his family to the horse races in the Sporting Club. On our way out he met with President Gabriel González Videla, his friend, to whom he introduced us. After chatting for a while about the horse, the President asked me where I had been. I answered that I came from Iquique where I had been in charge of the troops that guarded the Communists relegated in that place. The President made him repeat my name and we said good bye.

To the coal zone

Four days later, on Thursday morning I was called by the Academy Director. When you receive such a call from your superior, you immediately wonder what you have done wrong. I had my conscience clear, so I went in calmly to his office. Very briefly he transmitted me an order from Military High Command which sent me on a mission to the Schwager coal mines, atached to Infantry Regiment N° 9 Chillán. This order had taken into account the fact that I was the most junior officer in first year and consequently in the Academy, and that I well could postpone my studies for one year. In

the meantime I would be delegate of the head of the Emergency Zone in the Schwager Coal Mining Company. It was made clear that the vacancy to return next year to the same course would be maintained. As a soldier I could not but obey the order, and naturally I set about my mission at once.

The order caused problems at home. My wife had not yet recovered from the birth of our last child, nor had we finished the arrangements to settle down in our house. We had expected to live there for at least three years, which was the duration of studies at the Academy. My wife, who had always given me her love and comprehension with extraordinary loyalty and tranquility so natural of her, for the first time was suffering with this transfer. She told me things always turn out for the better and was resigned to what fate imposed on us without complaint, even though she was very distressed. She only asked the day of our departure, because our youngest daughter was only 23 days old, and it was necessary to buy some essentials for her.

We travelled to Chillán by train, where we were received by some officers who had the adresses of two or three boarding houses for us to see. As everything had happened so fast, when we arrived in Chillán we did not have a place in which to settle down. Therefore, while we looked for a house, we rented the second floor of a boarding house in the central part of the town.

In one opportunity I was with my two elder children in the bedroom where they were running and jumping while I tried to quiet them holding them in my arms. We produced such a noise that my wife ordered us to stop the noise which was bothering the other boarders on the first floor. Some days later I noticed that the ladies who owned the boarding house looked at me strangely. I found out they stared at me that way because of the answers my children had given when asked about the reason of the noises of that day; they had decided to say "mummy was beating daddy". These ladies kept on asking and the children had replied it was usual that mummy should beat daddy. They could not believe a lady so thin and smart could do such a thing to a huge man.

In just eight days I had radically changed my life, from student to troop officer. I had prepared the journey quickly, as I have said before, and turned up at my new post in the Chillán Regiment. However as the Regiment was short of officers, the Commander kept me for a while before sending me to my assignment. I soon found a house where we settled, leaving the boarding house.

As my youngest daughter had a problem with her eyes, my wife had to return to Santiago with the maid and children. She was three days in Santiago and then went to the farm of Santa Ana de Queri, while I had the house in Chillán where we would live painted.

I was occupied in these duties when I received the order to go to Coronel. I just had time to send a telegram and a letter to Santa Ana and I departed to the mines where I took up the post of delegate of the Head of the Emergency Zone in Coronel. In the meantime my letters and telegrams went unanswered, so my wife who had no news from me, decided to return to Chillán. She sent me a telegram to inform me which I did not receive either. The matter was cleared up later; the Santa Ana Post Office had received many telegrams and letters but the lady in charge of the office had kept them.

In Concepción I received instructions from the General in Command of the Third Division in which he stated my obligations and duties as his representative in the Schwager mines. The post was handed over by Major Juan Solari and he was the one who instructed me about the numerous activities I had to carry out as part of my duties in a post which I would take for the first time in my military career.

At the beginning of my activities I visited the headquarters of the Coal Miners Union in Coronel which was then in recess. In the union offices, only the heads were present. I had a long talk with them. During that meeting I noticed that these men talked the same language used by the Pisagua deportees, that is to say, that here too marxist-leninist ideology was the main form of expression.

I also visited the Governor of Coronel, Mr Puga, a retired Air Force General and brother of General Miguel Puga who had been my commander in the Chacabuco Regiment. I maintained excellent relations with him.

The sight which affected me most, was the condition of the housing estates where miners dwelt, their recreational facilities and the way they lived. The state of abandonment, misery and negligence of these workers was such that it produced irritation and bitterness. It was a fertile place for the spread of Communism.

So it proved to be with the passing of time. That neglect was encouraged by Marxists, so as to use the resulting misery to stress the difference of classes and facilitate their political exploitation of the people. These men, pressed by the lack of resources and overwhelmed by social problems could become a very receptive group for Communist ideas, which were being widely spread among the mine workers of that zone. Propaganda activity was ceaseless in its desire to sow hatred among those hardy workers and their families.

It should be stressed that Communists do not hesitate to sacrifice their own militants to impose their doctrine if it is necessary. I was able to confirm this in the case of the coal workers directive whose leaders were pressed, physically and morally, to scare those who pretended to collaborate with the Government. When the Communists were left out of the Government, the trade union leaders looked for ways to cooperate with the

authorities. They did so from the beginning, making contact with the military delegate to solve daily and specific problems such as hiring, leaves, reincorporations, etc. This collaborations lasted about eight months. But one morning numerous pamphlets and leaflets were spread about, full of slander against the five leaders, who were referred to as homosexuals and depraved men. This despicable action brought as a consequence that three of the five union directors quickly decided to leave the coal zone and go elsewhere. They disappeared from the mine never to return again. When I talked with the remaining two for the last time, I noticed they had been destroyed psychologically and morally, to the extent they wanted to commit suicide out of despair.

A perfect coordination between the coal miners union of Lota and Coronel had also existed. In spite of this, at the end of 1948, I got the miners to adopt independent decisions thanks to measures taken in due time, and thus the strike programmed for the end of the year which doubtless would have caused serious problems to the government could not be carried out. I think it is convenient to give details of what happened on that opportunity to show how Communists abuse of the solidarity of the workers, even going against their own wishes. I had news of the voting for the strike three days before, this obliged me as delegate to look for the way to prevent it. According to my information the voting would take place that Sunday in the theatre of the union. On Saturday, one day before I summoned a group of workers who I had managed to get rehired by the mine when they had missed two consecutive Mondays. We talked long and I finished asking them to help me now with the problem I had in my hands those days. These workers wanted to settle accounts with me and acted with remarkable honesty and rectitude. They asked me how to proceed and my aswer was very simple: when the President of the union asked to vote the strike they should shout distributed in different places of the cinema "we do not want a strike!, we do not want a strike!" That Sunday, I must confess I did not have very much trust in those workers. However their loyalty makes me, even today, remember them with affection. Before the assembly started I looked towards the audience and could see the men distributed in the suggested places, distant from one another. The assembly started with a long account of the President of the union Enrique Pérez Valdés. He finished as was anticipated asking the assembly to vote the strike by acclamation.

He had just said these words when strident voices shouting "we do not want a strike" were heard in the theatre, at first from a few ones and then from the whole audience. The President of the union and the other leaders tried to calm their spirits asking for silence, but did not manage to contain the shouts that were heard from every corner of the room. Pérez Valdés, in despair, tried to end the meeting. I then came closer and asserted

my authority as delegate of the Government. I told him his attitude woul force me to inform the Intendancy of Concepción that in that union he ha tried to force them to strike. In view of this, he desisted and was force to accept the decision of the workers. At midday the strike had failed i Schwager. This decision affected also the Lota union which, even if it ha wanted the strike, was hard pressed to put it into action after what ha happened in Schwager. In spite of this, the President of the Lota unio came to Coronel to insist on drawing the Schwager miners to strike. Befor he started his speech in Plaza Chollín, the square in the centre of th mining camp, he was warned we would not accept the least attempt t provoke a stoppage. This man, an old-rank Communist understood perfe tly well when I talked to him firmly and peremptorily.

Days passed by as usual, with the exception of Tuesdays when group of workers known as "failers" presented themselves at the offi door. They had been dismissed for failing to turn up for work on Monda and the head of personnel applied the law without any qualm. I had to g and talk with this gentleman to get them forgiven and reincorporate almost always for the last time.

On other occasions I met the leaders of the Schwager Coal Mini Union and talked as a friend with them. During these meetings, I look into the problems which most affected them. Their position was that t existing government "was formed by well-to-do people", therefore wh they had to deal with union problems they would always take the side the capitalists and never the one of the workers. From this, it was easy deduce the feeling of hatred rooted in their hearts and minds. They nurs that resentment against those who had more. This hatred was kept ali and fostered by the "comrades" from the outside.

During situations such as the ones we lived in those days, the comm nists took great pains to carry out diverse activities which would make t militants feel supported. If for any reason they could not carry out pub acts they would do that work underground.

To do this they established a permanent flow of pamphlets, leafle books and publications destined to train agitators and future commun leaders who surely would reappear once the party ceased being outlaw In conversations they showed themselves very sure that the period clandestinity would not last forever. Future traditional democratic gove ments would once again leave them an open field to develop their corros and destructive activity from within. Almost every day we found more a more pamphlets. Marxist literature covered the streets of Coronel in s of our control and the requisitions we carried out. Instead of diminishi there were always new discoveries. In one opportunity looking for expl ves in an old political club we found a huge basement where the lists names of Lota communists and tons of books were kept in boxes in per

order. The majority of the names belonged to coal miners and modest shopkeepers of the zone who kept in contact with each other. We also found two printing machines and diverse printing materials (paper, ink, etc.).

Mrs Luzmira's baskets

The most complicated case I had, among lesser incidents during my stay in Schwager, was when Coronel was suddenly flooded with pamphlets with strong criticism against the government and every sort of four-letter-word against the authorities. Uniformed and civilian policemen took great pains to find the origin of this propaganda, but could not find the author. More than once, these police forces blocked the entries to Coronel from Concepción and Lota to no avail. In spite of all these measures propaganda continued coming and spreading.

After studying which were the possible means employed by the Communists to bring such propaganda to Coronel, we arrived at the conclusion that the only possible way was to do it by train. That way they could employ perfectly innocent looking people who would travel with huge bundles from Concepción. We carried out a discreet control of the passengers during three days. One of the detectives noticed a middle-aged woman who used the train daily. She arrived from Concepción at 11.30 and would return the same afternoon at 17.30. On each trip she carried two huge baskets covered with flour sacks. On her arrival at Coronel she sold some bread at the station and then she would walk alone towards town where she carried out her business. I had a hunch on the day an inspector informed me about her. I ordered that when the train arrived somebody should await this person at the station exit. She would then be detained and taken to the civilian police station together with her baskets. The detention and transfer to the police station occurred with great scandal. She shouted that she was not allowed to earn her living decently, that she was an honest woman, etc. In spite of everything we managed to take her to the station where we proceeded to check her belongings and found under a layer of bread some packages which contained two to three thousand pamphlets. We had found the missing link. The lady was called Luzmira and she looked quite decent. We were now interested in finding out whom she contacted in town to distribute the propaganda.

When we asked her about whom she met in Coronel her answers were absolutely negative. She said she knew nobody, adding that she did not get in touch with anybody because her bread business lasted only a few hours. Concerning the packages she had agreed to bring them as a favour to somebody called Luis, whom she knew very little, but in Coronel they would be collected by somebody who knew her. We continued with the inquiries when I suddenly asked her to take out the wedding ring from

her left hand. She refused categorically, and only handed it to me when I asked for it firmly. I looked inside to read the inscription and I found the name engraved in it was that of the secretary of the union of the Schwager Coal Mining Company, a man called Cid.

We moved quickly to the union headquarters, where we detained Mr Cid, who denied knowing Mrs Luzmira even by name. I decided then to use the same method practised with the woman. I took out his wedding ring, inside was engraved the name of the woman we had detained. She was his wife. They had been caught, but in spite of this, he kept on lying. They did not know each other. With the detention of these two people, the intensity of the pamphlet propaganda declined sharply even though it continued spreading on a lesser scale.

The time I lived in Schwager, about a year, passed quickly. I was ordered to return to Santiago in the first days of February, so as to start once again the first year of the regular staff course at the War Academy.

Before returning to the garrison of Chillán, I presented myself to the General Headquarters of the Division. The Commander of the Division, General Vásquez, expressed his appreciation of my work, and sent a report to the Regiment on my behaviour and the way I carried out of my duties in the Schwager mines.

I travelled later to Chillán and presented myself to the Commander of the Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Figueroa, for whom I have a special affection for the way in which he took care of my family during my absence.

Strategy, Tactics and... Marxism

The year in Schwager left me with numerous worries which turned over in my mind. I was greatly disturbed trying to find out where we would be taken by the communist movement, who even though outlawed, was deeply rooted in Chile. I kept on thinking how serious the situation would be if their party were reestablished later by a democratic government. If at this moment, with all the odds against it, it could still attract adherents, later it would be able to do so with greater success. This concern about the marxist problem was set aside by the activities and studies as a student of the War Academy. Spare time was too scarce then to be thinking about any subject other than military ones. During those three years at the Academy, we studied history, strategy, tactics, operations and other subjects. The first and the last named took up most of my time. We now studied the Second World War with a better background, and also the actions of the Korean War.

At the end of each of the three years in the War Academy, we travelled to different places in Chile. First we went to the interior of Curicó and then

to Pucón. On our last trip we went to the extreme south, Punta Arenas and Coyhaique. I became aware of the isolation in which people live in those regions.

At the end of the third year we were named staff officers, and I also was offered a teaching post in the Academy.

Two days after I left the school, I was called by the Director of the Military Academy, Colonel Oscar Sagüés Zúñiga, the same chief I had in the Infantry School. After talking about different subjects he told me he had called me to offer me the post of Commander of the sixth year class. I accepted with thanks, and at the end of January I was wearing the badges of an officer of the Military Academy.

I was named teacher of the military course and I was able to continue my classes as auxiliary teacher of Military Geography and Geopolitics in the War Academy. I was also named Director of "Cien Aguilas" the institutional magazine of the Military Academy.

Among the activities of that period I had to receive a company of the Military Academy of Colombia commanded by Major Abraham Baron with whom we had become very good friends from the time I was at the School of Infantry, and who would be later ambassador of his country in Chile.

My preoccupation about the role of Marxism in the world reappeared that year. When I talked about these problems with my intimate friends, they generally laughed and replied that "Communism will never arrive in Chile", and that I had no reason to be worried. The anxieties I had in 1948 to find out the truth about Marxism in Chile, were only dormant during my studies in the War Academy. Now when I was working as an officer of the Military Academy and without the intense pressure of my period as student of the War Academy, the concerns and questions which had worried me for years reappeared. That year, 1952, I worked hard as commander of a company of cadets of the Military Academy; this activity absorbed most of my time, but I continued with my studies on Marxism.

As Director of "Cien Aguilas", I made contact with other similar magazines. I started an exchange of these publications whose articles contained only military subjects, and improved relations with other Military Academies of Latin America.

Presidential elections took place in 1952 in which an independent candidate, General Carlos Ibáñez, was elected President. According to the campaign speeches, we all expected a severe or even dictatorial political reorganization, but nothing happened. Besides the retirement of numerous Army generals, the politics of the country continued as usual.

The day after the presidential election I went to talk with the Director of the Academy, Colonel-Director Luis Jerez, to whom I explained my worry about my possible promotion, which would force me to look for new assignment, because there was no vacancy in the Academy. The Colonel

looked at me, smiled and together we looked at the list of seniority. Grinning, he said: "You are very optimistic, Captain, for you are number 73 among the captains and you have at least two more years to go, so don't worry."

"Yes, sir –I replied–, but if I get promoted I will have no place where to go, and now I can ask you I wish to be sent to Arica as Operations and Intelligence officer of that unit. I have also been appointed teacher of Military Geography and Geopolitics, so I see no reason to stay in Santiago".

"Very well –he said–. I will give you the pass to be transferred to Arica when the destination plan comes".

On January 2nd my destination to Arica was approved. I had to remain in the Academy until I carried out a commission in the North which consisted in taking admission exams to the candidates for the Academy. I did this the first week of January 1953. On that trip, I took the opportunity of looking for a house to rent in Arica, as my destination was about to be published in the Official Bulletin. I found a new house which would be ready just when I arrived in March with the family. Apart from that, before leaving the Academy, I was appointed Head of the Military Forces in Pumanque for the Congressional and Municipal elections of March 1st 1953.

According to the law I had to be in Pumanque 48 hours before the election. I decided to take my son Augusto who was then seven years old with me. Everything went smoothly; the lodging in the hotel, which was a big old house, was very pleasant and the lady who owned the place gave us excellent rooms. That evening we went to a circus and the following day we walked through the town and visited its church. In the afternoon after lunch my son took a nap and I used that time to see the troop and take some measures before the election. I was doing this when a very nice gentleman came to me and told me not to worry about order in the town, because this was a very peaceful place where only three people, two socialists and a radical voted against the government. I did not believe him but it proved to be so when the votes were counted.

While I took care of the troops my son woke up and went to walk through the vegetable garden of the hotel. On the bottom wall he found several prickly pear cacti, and without considering the consequences he picked some prickly pears, getting his hands full of thorns. He was very scared and found nothing better to do than return to our bedroom and clean his hands on my underwear which was in the suitcase. Luckily the landlady came, and when she saw what had happened cleaned the clothes and removed the thorns from his hands with oil. I knew nothing of this until the following morning when I put on my vest and felt a terrible itching in my back. When I complained to the lady about the possibility of insects in the room, she cleared up the matter and named the guilty person. I decided to say nothing to my son.

During that week we began preparations to travel to Arica on the ship "Viña del Mar". I was having lunch in the Military Club four days before departure when I met an old friend who was head of the War Material Directory. During the conversation, my destination to the Infantry Regiment N° 4 "Rancagua" as Head of Operations and Information, turned up. I explained to him my plans about the numerous reconnaisance outings I had to carry out according to the orders I had received from the General Staff, each of which lasted about 15 days on muleback. I had the possibility of shortening these periods of mountain reconnaisance if I could dispose of a support vehicle, such as a jeep. He smiled and said: "If you take it from here on your own account, you can count on that jeep. Come tomorrow to the depot and I will deliver it to you". So it happened that the following morning I was given a vehicle than even had its licence up to date.

I drove it to Valparaíso where I embarked it together with my belongings. We were given very good berths in the ship, and to attend the children we took with us a maid called Lidia. Among the passengers we met some people we knew who had been transferred to Arica. The six days of the voyage were very pleasant, and the officers and their wives were waiting for us when we arrived. We settled in the house we had rented in January and I presented myself immediately to Lieutenant Colonel Murphy who decided that I should assume the post of Captain Commander of a batallion in recess, and later I took up my post as "Officer of Intelligence and Operations" of the unit.

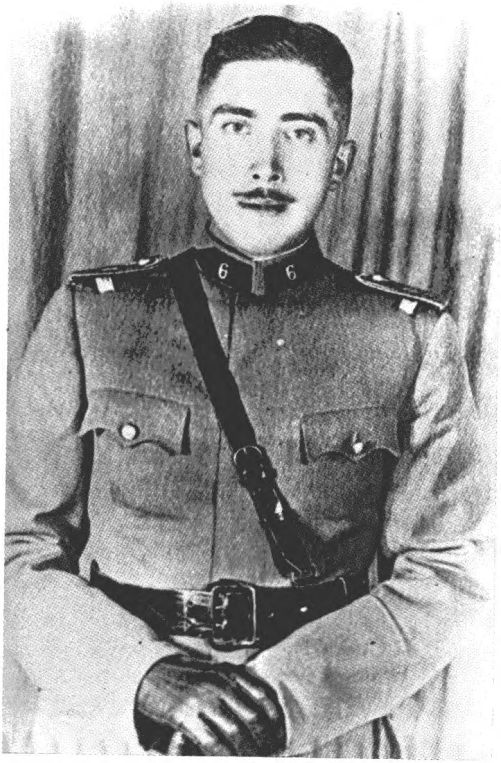
I started to work, studying the background information on my post, and was also given the job of Military Attorney of Arica, which involved very little work in those years.

Arica was then short of electric power; for that reason we were forced to buy Petromax oil lamps, which made a deafening noise when we lit them, but at least they gave us light. My wife soon had the house neat and clean as usual. I was starting a new stage in my military life with the initiation of my duties and the installation in a new house. I think it was one of the happiest periods of my life. My wife and children have never forgotten it.

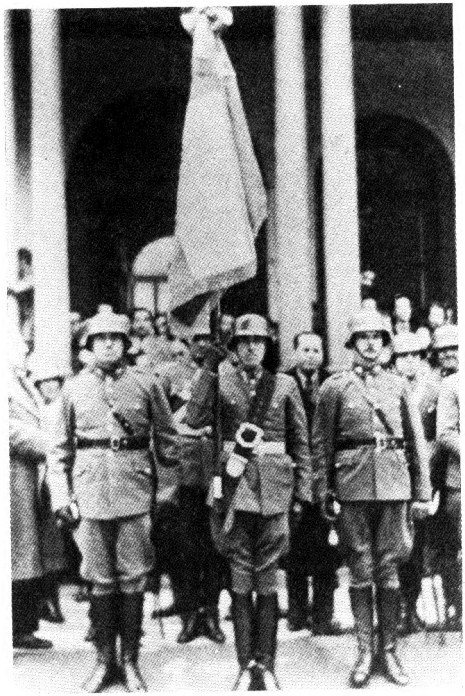
The author with trainee officers, 1937.

Return of the Trainee Officers Course, 1937.

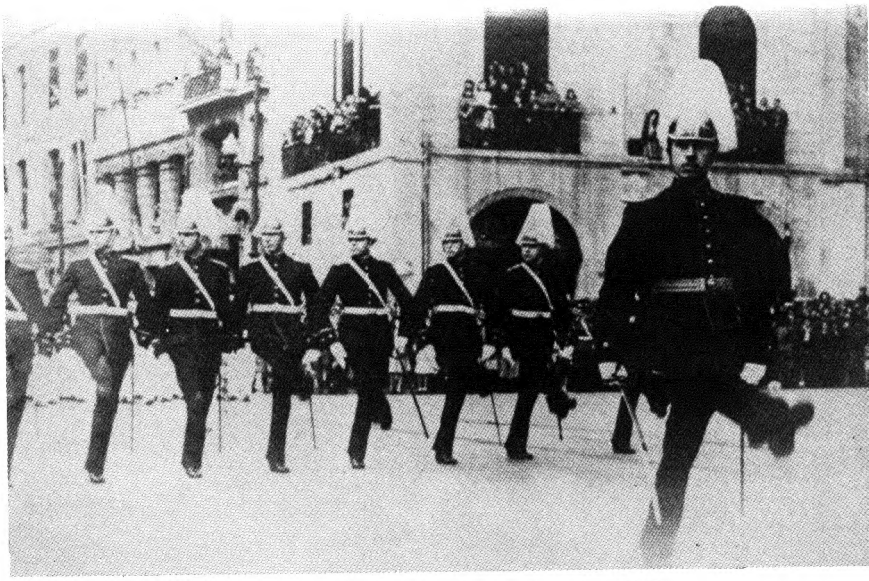
Lieutenant in Command of the Cadet Section in the barracks of the Old Military School.



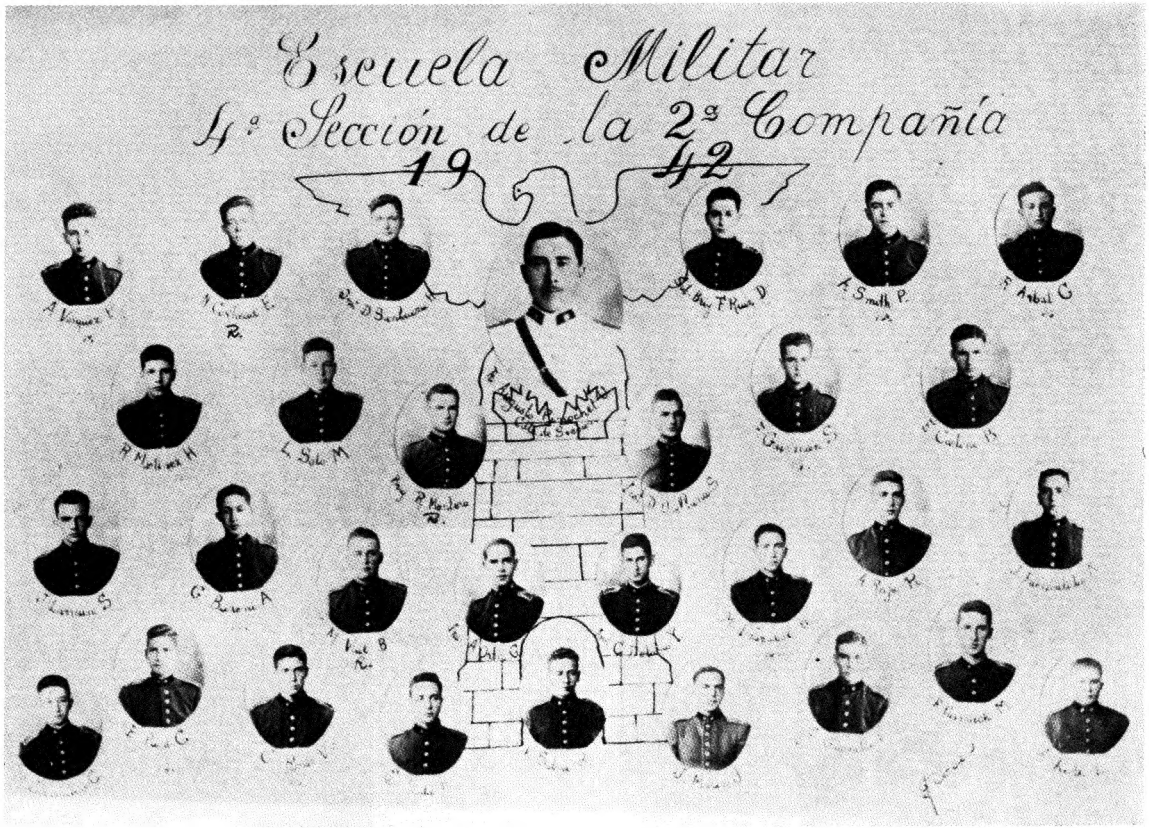
Sub-Lieutenant of the "Chacabuco" Regiment.



Standard bearer of the Infantry School, 1940.



The author with the Cadet Course, 1943.

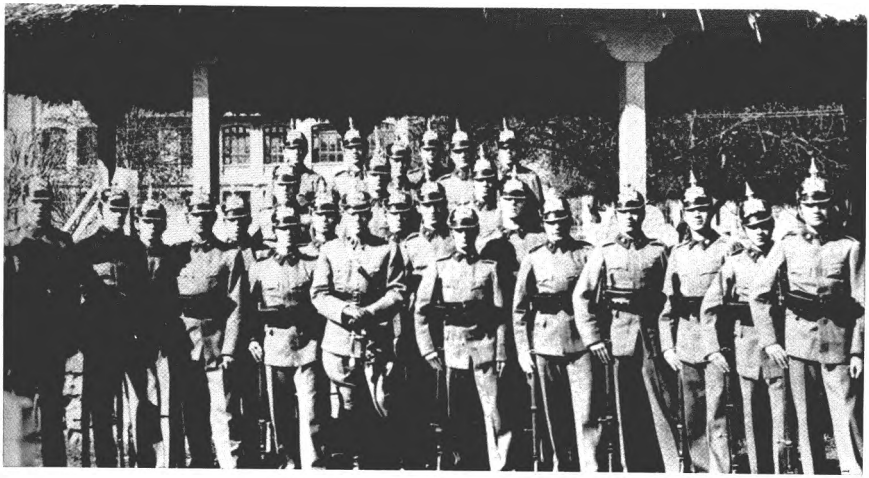


4th Section, Second Company - Military Academy, 1942.

Standard bearer of the Military Academy, 1942.

January 30th, 1943.
The author's marriage to Lucía Hiriart R.

Assistant officer of the Military Course, 1944.



With the Cadet Course, 1943.

Military Academy Staff 1938 - 1944 Chiefs and Officers.

In the Academy of War.

Captain of the Military Academy, 1952.

Commander of a Company of the Military Academy, 1953.

THIRD PART
PREPARATION FOR HIGH COMMAND

CHAPTER I
Head of Operations and Information

Lieutenant Colonel Luis Carvajal assumed as Second Commander after we were settled in Arica. We had very good relations with him and his wife since my stay in Chillán when I had been serving in Schwager. We were very happy with his arrival at the Garrison.

The vehicle which I had loaded onto the same ship in which we had come, had to be unloaded first onto a barge and taken to a quayside where it was picked up by a crane that landed it on the dock. As a result of the handling a lamp was broken and the right seat fell out into the sea. The Commander of the Regiment assigned it for the exclusive use of the head of Operations, according to the orders of the General Staff. Therefore I had to take care of it as if it were my personal property. This pleased me very much because I did not have a vehicle of my own.

We had just settled in our house when we were visited by most of the married officers and their wives. We returned these calls following the usage of those years. We also received the visit of old friends whom we had known in Iquique and who were now living in Arica.

After the prescribed presentations, the commander of the Unit, Colonel Murphy, put me in command of a batallion composed of the services company and three companies of the Military Labor Corps. I was also handed over the office of the Military Attorney of the Garrison and the Second Section of Operations and Information.

I started to get acquainted with the obligations and duties I would have to carry out when I assumed these posts. The activity which took up most of my time was the one related to "Operations and Information", which was really the post to which I had been assigned, without leaving aside the other responsibilities. To learn about operations and information I read numerous reports written by my predecessors, studied the rules, acquainted myself with the files, communiques and pending documents, until at the end of two weeks, I was fairly well informed. I took special care to put in order an interesting secret archive which contained very important data. After I was fully familiarized with it, I brought the kardex up to date with the data supplied by the General Staff; made an inventory of the reconnaisance topographic charts and of other connected subjects and studied the planning of the unit. I presented a new plan of operations together with Colonel Carvajal, which was later approved by the General Staff.

Second Sergeant Rojas was assigned as assistant and typist of the department. He was an outstanding non-commissioned officer, trustworthy, loyal, with a great spirit of sacrifice and knew the region very well. Likewise, private Llerena was assigned as mounted orderly and to take care of the cleaning. As we did not have a horse he cooperated in the arrangement of the office which was soon in the best of conditions for occupation by the personnel of the department. The house we had rented was excellently arranged by my wife. The maid we had brought got used to Arica and was a great help with the children while we stayed there.

At the end of April, the Official Bulletin N° 19 carried my promotion to Army Major, which was very much celebrated by my fellow officers with several social meetings. I also received authorization in June to use the gold star "Goddess Minerva" which was awarded to me in a solemn ceremony by the Commander of the Regiment. It was the reward for my work as teacher of the Academy.

Travelling through the North.

We travelled several times to Tacna with my family during those first weeks. Food was cheaper there than in Arica. We also used those trips to buy spare parts for our lamps, and to visit some friends, both Chilean and Peruvian who had shops in that town.

My schedule specified that I had to make a reconnaisance trip in the third month of the year. To do this I started preparing my first journey to the interior of Arica towards the portezuelo or pass of Putre-Parinacota-Chapiquiña. As, according to the topographic map, there was no road from Arica to the frontier zone where I had to work, we decided to take the jeep by train up to Colonel Alcérreca Station, on the Arica-La Paz line, where

we would unload it onto the ramp. From there we could travel as we wished along the numerous dirt roads and tracks used by trucks collecting yareta shrub.

We proceeded to put the vehicle on the train to Bolivia and I settled in the sleeping car with sub-officer Reyes, mechanic Kruger and driver Flores.

After a not a very comfortable journey due to the deafening noise of the rack used for climbing the steep slopes and the rattling of the cars over the rails we arrived at Coronel Alcérreca Station where after shunting the train to place the wagon next to the ramp, we unloaded the jeep and a small trailer with our equipment. It was about 6 a.m. Once ready we had breakfast and prepared to drive towards the village of Putre.

Coronel Alcérreca was a small hamlet in the charge of a newly appointed sub-delegate. He was very attentive, and gave us a full explanation about the road which would take us to Putre, our first stop. About ten o'clock we crossed the Allani ravine and continued towards Putre.

Even though altitude did not affect us, little by little things became more difficult, because the track to the place where we expected to stop for the night was not well marked. The road we took bordering Taapaca Hill was at over 5.000 meters altitude, which made our noses and throats fell dry. We carried out some reconnaisance work in the zone of that hill and continued later to the village of Putre.

We arrived there at nightfall, when it becomes very cold. To come down to the village we took a very dangerous road. A police First sergeant was waiting for us at the foot of the hill. He offered us the chance to spend the night in an empty room. He also offered us some elements to survive those days in our field work. Police personnel was very kind an helped us a lot while we stayed in the village. For example we had to take the water out of the radiator of the jeep to prevent it freezing and causing a leak. We kept the vehicle in a high but sheltered place to be able to move it downhill the following morning.

After preparing our quarters, we ate the food we had brought before it became dark. The policemen offered us to share their meal with us and we exchanged some food with them. We spent the night in the rooms they had offered us, which were quite comfortable. I was given a small room where I installed my camp bed and my toiletries. That night was freezing, and in spite of a yareta stove I could not help feeling the bitter cold; the thermometer outside the window showed a temperature of 21 degrees centigrades below zero.

Next day when we were about to leave we found the oil in the jeep had frozen. This forced us to light a fire to heat the different parts after which we removed the wedges to let the jeep roll down and make it start. Luckily the plan worked. After going up again the Tarapacá road we went

towards Portezuelo de Putre and later to a plant the Public Works Company had in Portezuelo de Chapiquiña. The engineers and workers who were building a tunnel to divert the waters of the river Lauca towards the Azapa valley fot irrigation, had a camp in that place. After talking with the people in charge of the installation they offered us rooms and we spent the night in the Public works camp.

The following morning we returned to the Alcérreca station through the Allani ravine and stayed there before leaving next morning for Arica. We were at the station when we met the Alcérreca sub-delegate who was coming from Santiago. He told us he had an agreement with the sub-delegate of Pachía to allow the passing of vehicles through Peruvian territory. At first I felt doubtful but I decided to take the risk and we accepted the offer because availing ourselves of the authorization allowed us to save a lot of time; the road was faster and, apart from that, we would be able to know the zone of the Palca ravine which was very interesting.

The sub-delegate issued us the permission and in the afternoon we left towards the north. The road took us to Villa Industrial where we spent the night in a thatched roof hut. Next day we watched the building of the Azucarera or Usuchuma Canal, which had been authorized by the Treaty of 1929. It collects the water from streams coming from the Tacora Volcano and flows into the Caplina river increasing its irrigation area. We then continued west and entered the Palca ravine.

We had no difficulty to get into Perú, as the agreement really existed and was respected by the Peruvian authorities. We arrived at about 9 p.m. at the village of Pachía where we had dinner at the inn of Don Agustín, whom I had known for a long time. After dinner we continued our trip to Arica where we arrived about midnight, to the great surprise of my family which was not expecting my return so soon.

Next day I reformed the Commander of the Regiment of all we had done during the reconnaisance trip and later presented him the final report to be sent to the General Staff.

We used those days to travel with my wife and children to the Lluta and Azapa valleys, where we bought poultry and vegetables. We all enjoyed the countryside and family ties became stronger happily together.

Days went by with plenty of activity in my work. The family spent a pleasant and leisurely domestic life in Arica, because the children attended the school run by italian Sisters very near the house in the mornings and in the afternoons were free to do their homeworks or go out with us.

My friends of the Lions Club insisted I should enrol as a member. Don Carlos Koch told me that, as a friend of his son Ludwig, I simply had to join. I was delighted to do so. Thus I became a member of the club, and later was named Director.

The Board of Directors used to meet on Thuesdays to have a cup of tea or coffee and to discuss how we could help people in need of assistance of the zone. Apart from this we had a "Lions" dinner once a month, sometimes accompanied by our wives. In one of those parties organized by the club to collect funds I donated a turkey for the raffle. When the numbers were drawn I got the prize. Naturally I could not accept it, and decided to auction it. Carlos Koch was the highest bidder and he invited us to a turkey dinner at his house, which took place the following week. It was a very pleasant meal.

On April 5th we received a coded message indicating that His Excellency the President of the Republic General Carlos Ibáñez would be arriving at the city on the 8th at midday, on the penultimate stage of his trip to the North of Chile. I remember the honor Mayor Edmundo Flores bestowed on him. He declared the President a guest of honour and gave him the keys of the city. We offered him a lunch in the officers mess which was attended by all the authorities and the consular corps. The President and his retinue returned to Santiago the following day, after a meeting with the authorities in which he expressed his intention to assist Arica. I heard there for the first time from the lips of Minister Rossetti the idea of a Free Port which was part of the Plan for the Progress of Arica.

As in other years, a beautiful ceremony took place on June 7th to conmemorate the Taking of the Morro de Arica, a promontory captured by the Chilean soldiers during the War of the Pacific. The night before the people marched with torches through the town; the column crossed the city and advanced to the highest part of the Morro. The Railway Company used to put a train at the disposal of those who wished to reach the plain ground on top of the Morro.

This train used the tracks of the old ammunition railway which started at the munitions deposits which supplied the guns emplaced at the top of the rock. These guns had been removed after the treaty with Perú. The train would climb the slope with the engine pushing the convoy from the rear.

Not everything was happiness and joy in that opportunity. I was in the plain with the military unit when I saw the train going up. When it reached the top it derailed and turned over. What had happened? The engine driver who was pushing the train from behind did not notice the stop signals and the train therefore continued beyond the rails through the ground. This made the train turn over. The convoy was left in an extremely dangerous position where it could fall from the upper part of the hill on to the city below. I then remembered that my family was coming on that train. I ran to see if they were among the casualties. Thanks God they had taken one of the last cars which had not turned over. We were very sorry to know that one of those injured had died later.

As a way to make economies in the family budget and at the same time travel about, my wife and I decided to go to the Azapa valley every Wednesday and to Tacna every Saturday and Sunday. We made the trip by car with the children who did not have classes those days. We used our trip through the Azapa valley to buy fruit, vegetables and other supplies at very convenient prices. For instance we could get two sacks of oranges for five pesos, when a dozen cost six pesos in Arica. This way we made friends with the owner of a small farm in Alto Ramírez who would offer us tea or coffee as a sign of friendship.

On Sundays after mass we used to meet with the officers and some civilian friends to have a drink and a "empanada", in the Hotel Pacífico. In the afternoon we would go to the beach, specially to the Machas Beach where we collected lots of razor clams.

Thus time went by, and the moment came to make the second trip to the interior, this time towards Guallatiri, according to the plan sent by the Head of Operations of the Sixth Division. We made the journey just as the previous one, but we put into practice the experiences gained on our first trip. Once again we started the reconnaisance on board the train up to Coronel Alcérreca station; there unloaded the jeep and continued with the driver and typist towards the Parinacota region, where we stayed at the local police station. The villages of the interior are populated only during certain periods of the year. That is why we found the village deserted and only three policemen in residence. They gave us every kind of help. The work we had to carry out was very interesting. I saw the old church with its small bellfry, and the parinas, a beautiful kind of heron, with an elegant flight showing the red feathers under its wings.

The following day, in spite of the intense cold, we went southeast through a fairly acceptable road. In two opportunities we crossed flocks of vicunas, whose skin is much appreciated. We caught some and we skinned them to be tanned. We did not eat the whole meat, only the sirloins, because the meat of these animals is tough and fibrous.

We arrived at Guallatiri in the afternoon. We stopped in that place for the night and had dinner in a cave we found in the zone. Next morning we went to Chapiquiña where we forded the Lauca river. The head of the camp was a very good friend of mine. He was married to a friend of my wife who had been to school together in San Bernardo. The table was served by an indian girl called Victoria who at the end of the meals emptied the glasses before keeping them in the cupboard without washing them. I never found out how she did the dishes.

In that place I collected a lot of information about the zone such as its population, number of cattle, installations, etc., which I would later use to prepare my work.

We returned as we had done the previous time and reached Arica without any problem. I had a very pleasant surprise on my arrival at Arica for there I found my mother who had come to stay with us to escape from the cold winter months in central Chile. I was very happy to have her with us for a while, and we arranged a comfortable room for her. As she was an active person, she soon started to go out and quickly got used to the city and its surroundings. In a few days she knew Arica better than we did. She went through its markets and shops, and was able to identify quite well those who brought smuggled goods. She soon met some friends she had known before my father died, and this allowed her to lead an independent life from us, because she was frequently invited to have tea with her friends or to go out with them. Her stay in Arica was thus very pleasant.

Arica had those years about 18.000 inhabitants. Some people smuggled goods which were brought in foreign ships. There you could buy cigarettes, whisky, soap, perfumes, and many other things. Ariqueños used to smoke American cigarettes, drink good whisky or Spanish brandy, things not easily avaible in the rest of Chile.

One afternoon I received a document from the Judge of the city in which he named me as expert to investigate the railway accident of June 7th 1953. I got in touch with the magistrate, and asked him for the background and instructions on the case, and proceeded to make an investigation of the accident.

Life in Arica continued normally, now in the company of my mother. As usual we travelled to the Azapa valley on Wednesdays. On other occasions I used to invite my family to Tacna. There we went shopping, passed to Pachía or went to have lunch at a restaurant, because, as I have said, food was cheaper in Tacna than in Arica and it was very pleasant to have the excellent stewed chicken with peas and french fries, or roasted "cuyes" –a sort of guinea-pig -with salad.

I found in Tacna a former cadet married to a Chilean girl who attended his shop with his family, and with whom we became very good friends. I also met another good friend I knew from 1945. He owned a big shop with a very good assortment of products and plenty of tempting things to buy, but as I have always disliked incurring in debt, we bought only when we had the money to do it. However, he insisted on giving me credit, which in the end I accepted. This allowed us to buy some things for the house such as china, cutlery and crystal. We paid when we had the money, which was really very comfortable for us. I never bought beyone by capacity to pay, and I only bought once the previous credit was paid. Likewise when we travelled to Tacna we took advantage of the lower prices to buy food, and returned to Arica with the vehicle with enough provisions for the week.

Days before going on a third trip to the interior of the Department, and while I was preparing for the journey a fellow officer came into my

office. He saw my pistol on my desk, took it and started to threaten me with it in jest. I asked him to be careful, because weapons are dangerous toys, and on more than one occasion a gun had shot involuntarily, as had happened in the Carampangue regiment where an officer had lost his life. I also told him about the case of the cadet who had almost killed another boy when his rifle had gone off. It was then better to stop joking because he could kill any of the persons in the office. He continued with his joke, and paying no attention to what I was telling him, replied: "I am going to kill you", putting the pistol to my right temple. Luckily, I turned away the weapon with a swift movement, just at the moment the bullet was coming out. The officer, who was a good friend, almost fainted from the shock, because he had checked the gun, and nearly killed me as a result of his foolishness. He asked me as a special favour not to report the incident or tell anybody about it. I kept absolute discretion.

At the end of July everything was ready to go on our third reconnaisance trip, his time towards the Surire salt flat. We arrived at Alcérreca as usual; as on the other trips we passed the Allani ravine and reached Putre where we spent the night in the police station.

Next day we were invited to have lunch in Santa Julia, in the house of a Putre resident. Lunch was very pleasant. Our host offered us some excellent drinks before sitting down for the meal. The hostess served us a huge plate not very appealing to the eye, but very tasty, to the point that when she offered us another helping, many, including myself, accepted her kind offer. Later when we were seated in a gallery she asked us if we had liked the main course. We all praised it, but we were very surprised when she told us it was "young dog", and that its meat was very healthy for the lungs.

We slept in Putre and the following day we made our way to the Purire salt flat, on the southeast of the Department. Travelling through the salt deposits was an interesting experience, because on the southeast side there was a hot water spa, where people passing by used to take baths. After the bath you had to wrap yourself quickly so as not to catch pneumonia or a bad cold. Those waters were very good for muscular pains and skin diseases. We all had a bath in the spa and after that rested for at least a couple of hours.

After our thermal bath we settled in a small cave near Chilcaya where we slept and the following morning we took the road to Alcérreca. We returned again as the previous times with a special permit from the sub-delegate. He was at that moment with his wife, a pleasant lady who in spite of wearing a fur coat, was feeling very cold. She was very distressed there because apart from living in an almost deserted place she had very little to do, even though she had taken under her charge a small infirmary

During the month she had been there she had attended only four people, and received the complaints of the villagers who rejected her as an outsider.

Our trip to Tacna had a problem for the first time when a Peruvian non-commissioned officer told me:

- "You have passed through here many times this year",
- "Only twice; this is the third time", I replied.
- "But these permits are not for this, even less to allow the passing of people from Arica", he insisted.
- "Well, so be it", –I said – "now if you wish, I'll turn back".
- "No" he answered. "But when you go out you must bring an exit permit from Arica so as not to have trouble".

I thanked him and we continued our journey to Arica where we arrived very happy after an absence of a week.

I proposed to the Commander of the Regiment the construction of a landing field in the Chapiquiña zone, where I had found a fairly suitable place. He accepted on condition it would be constructed by the Military Labour Corps. For the construction we requested the help of the commander of the "Los Cóndores" Air Force Base in Iquique, which was granted. This allowed us to start at once with the preliminary studies, with flights over the zone combined with journeys in vehicles from Colonel Alcérreca up to the entry of the Pass of Chapiquiña. Instructions were given to the Military Labour Corps, and by mid August we started the work previous to the construction of the landing field.

At the end of July we were invited to a party in the Hotel Turismo of Tacna to celebrate the anniversary of the Peruvian Police Corps to which we assisted in formal dress. A few days later the Peruvian military unit offered a party in the same hotel where a feeling of great comradeship prevailed, and we received proofs of affection from the commander of the Tacna Regiment and from the other officers and their wives.

I also received in July a communique from the Minister of Defense in which he congratulated me for the book I had written, the "Geographical Synthesis of Chile, Argentina, Bolivia an Perú", which publication was being distributed throughout the country. Its purchase was recommended for the military academies.

The work in the Chapiquiña zone for the building of the landing field started in August. To install the Company of the Military Labour Corps, I asked the chief engineer to allow the use of some empty storehouses which belonged to the Public Works service. It was accepted and I proceeded to leave there the tools and all the campaign elements we took to that area. Work on the landing field, about 1.200 meters long, was carried out under the control of an officer of the Air Force, who was the first one to land on it just when it was about to be finished.

When the company of the Military Labour Corps arrived there, they found the only female in the place was Victoria, an untidy indian woman who prepared our meals and attended the engineers dining-room. At first, the privates refused to talk with her, but after a month this lady had become the "queen" of the camp with 150 men courting her. They even serenaded her by moonlight.

The rest of the trips to the interior were made on the Arica-La Paz train; Colonel Alcérreca station was used as our terminal. During those trips we went to Visviri and Villa Industrial.

In Bolivia.

As my mother was staying in Arica, I asked her to look after our children while we went to La Paz to visit my sister who was married to a Bolivian citizen, Rafael Saavedra, son of don Bautista Saavedra. We travelled in the Arica-La Paz train. My sister received us affectionately.

My wife and I stayed ten days in Bolivia. We went to La Paz and Cochabamba, this last an old style and very pleasant city being only 2.750 meters above sea level. We had problems with the altitude only the first day when we were invited to a reception by the Chilean Military Attaché in Bolivia, Colonel Adrián Barrientos, whose adjutant I had been in the Military Academy. I met in that occasion numerous Bolivian Authorities both military and civilian. We visited many places in La Paz, among them the Military Academy whose classrooms still showed bullet marks from the revolution of the previous year, which had cost the lives of many cadets.

An uncle of my brother-in-law, Mr Iturrealde Chinel, was the Minister of Education. When he learnt that I would be travelling to Cochabamba, he kindly gave me a letter of introduction to visit the Command and Staff Academy in that city. I thanked him warmly as it would allow me to know one of the most modern academies of Bolivia at that moment, and at the same time exchange ideas with the officers preparing for High Command. During my visit I was able to see the whole building including the war games room, and talk with the director and Secretary of Study of the Academy who were elite officers of great proffessionalism.

I went to the Post Office that day in the afternoon, on my way back it was so hot I stopped to have a refreshment in a place near the square. The owner asked me if I was a Chilean. When I nodded yes his wife came through a side door and I was greatly surprised to discover that she was a lady whose family lived next to our house in Valparaíso. After we had greeted and identified each other as natives of that port and mutually happy with this meeting, she told me she had married in Valparaíso and had come to settle in Cochabamba with her husband. They had opened that shop which had prospered and allowed them to live comfortably. After

I had finished the soft drink and met her children they invited us to have dinner at their house. We had to refuse the invitation as we had a prior engagement with an official of the Chilean Consulate in Cochabamba and were returning to La Paz the following morning.

The plane in which we returned to La Paz was taking a bandit who had murdered the head of the police station of a village of the interior. He looked at us with hatred in his eyes, which scared my wife very much. As a show of their affection the pilots of the plane gave us a tiger head which I, in turn, gave to my sister. It was too cumbersome to take to Arica.

A difficult flight

In Arica we found our family in perfect condition. My mother had been invited and entertained by all her friends who tried to make her stay as pleasant as possible. She had made very good friends in the city who were very affectionate with her.

I carried out my fourth trip to the interior the first days of September, going through the Tacora hill zone. It allowed me to familiarize myself with the villages of Villa Industrial and Visviri.

My mother had to return after the September holidays, and as I had also been called to Santiago by the General Staff, I got two places in an Air Force plane which would travel to Arica on a service trip. We had to be there before 9 a.m. on the following day, but a last-minute notice informed us that the departure would be at 7 a.m.

Everything was carried out as it was foreseen, and we boarded the two-engined beechcraft plane. We were the only passengers. The crew consisted of two pilots and the mechanic. Captain Vega the Commander of the plane informed us that there had not been enough time tell everybody about the change of time and that others had cancelled their tickets when they found out. We took off from El Buitre Airport and gained height toward the south. A few minutes later, and while we were flying over the sea I felt a strong bump against one of the sides of the plane. I called the mechanic and asked him what was happening. He answered that probably there was a drop of water in the gasoline, which produced the noise. I accepted his explanation, being absolutely ignorant about the subject.

However a short while later we had another explosion, followed by more explosions more frequently every time. All that made me think the explanation was not very convincing and that something abnormal was happening. I decided then to tell commander Vega it was better to land in Iquique over whose coast we were, and ask engineer Vera, who was a friend of mine and an excellent professional, to check the fault. Commander Vega agreed and we turned round and landed in Cavancha. Engineer Vera came and started to check the plane while I talked with my mother

who looked very upset. We tried to calm her down telling her we could not fly because of a radio failure which prevented us from landing in Santiago which was covered with fog. She, being very suspicious, told me: "Do you think your mother is ignorant? That is another failure, but keep quiet, nothing will happen to us if you are with me".

We had been there about three hours when a group of officers of the Carampangue Regiment came to greet us and to invite us to lunch with the two pilots. Engineer Vera had told me that it would take him at least three more hours to repair the fault. We returned to Cavancha about 15.00, when they were finishing with the repairs. Engineer Vera called the pilots, the mechanic and myself aside and told us, showing us a filter which looked like a shooting cartridge bashed in by compression: "The plane would have caught fire in the air with ten more minutes of flight. The filter got damaged because it had been put in sideways and screwed with a mechanical electric screwdriver. Due to this the fuel dosage was excessive. Thank God you came to the base, or you would have fallen into the sea". Luckily my mother did not hear a word of all this.

I presented myself in Santiago to the Head of Operations of the General Staff who handed me an order to carry out a reconnaisance on muleback in the general direction of Arica-Tignamar-Orcotunco-Portezuelo de Japu. I sent a coded message with the orders given to the Commander of the Regiment by whom they were approved. I also sent orders to prepare things so that when I returned in ten days time everything would be ready to start on the appointed date. Each reconnaisance meant a long lecture to the officers of the Regiment. On the other hand many of them were very interested in coming with me, which allowed me to make a good selection.

While in Santiago I carried out all the missions I had undertaken. I travelled to Viña del Mar where I left my mother in the house of my sister Teresa and later visited my parents-in-law. I returned to Arica on a LAN-Chile plane where I found everything normal.

On November 26th, a day after my birthday, we started the reconnaisance trip from Arica. We entered the Garza ravine and arrived at night to a village near Tignamar where we were well received. The hostess did not allow me to sleep on the floor and gave me the only available bed with great deference. The officers slept on the earthen floor of another room. Next day after breakfast we continued to Tignamar where we spent the rest of the day checking the equipment and studying the area on the map. We slept that night there to acclimatize the cattle that were sick from the altitude.

We restarted our march very early, entering through the Orcotumbo Pass where the wind was so strong that our progress became extremely difficult. The speed of the wind was such we could not even walk. We

reached the top of the pass with great difficulty, but as soon as we crossed it we found no wind on the other side, which formed part of the Lauca valley. It was a good place to set up camp and we stopped before night and prepared a light dinner. The enlisted men took the cattle to graze to a plain with plenty of grass and water. One of the five enlisted men I was taking, Private Chispe, came from this area and easily found water and grass for the cattle. He proved essential for our reconnaisance work.

The following day we continued to Guallatiri where we stopped for the night in the Police station. We started from there to reconnoitre the Japu or Macaya pass, where we found the boundary markers destroyed on the ground. On our way back, night came upon us and it was very difficult to find our way. To this was added a rainstorm and lightning which made our progress harder. The private advised us to put aside every metallic article so as not to attract the lightning falling on the zone. After a difficult march we arrived to the Police Station with our clothes soaked in spite of the waterproof capes. We unharnessed, dried the horses and left them in the stables.

The next day was sunny so we started the march first towards the south and then took the road to Tignamar. We stopped for the night at the beginning of the track existing in that place.

The following day we continued our progress towards the northeast in the direction of Arica, for which we crossed the Higuera ravine, and decided to walk along the high ground between the Higuera and Azapa valleys. In the latter we found numerous crosses, in what appeared to be a cemetery. When we asked Private Chispe the meaning of this, he explained they belonged to the local indians, who from excess of drink fell from the high ground to the bottom of the ravine. He added that sometimes the wife of the indian also dies if he is taking her on the rump of his horse. Our march towards Arica continued along the high ground, and at nightfall we decided to camp in a small hollow.

The following day we proceeded our march westwards. We arrived at the top of the village of Azapa, descended into the valley and had lunch in a local restaurant. We continued then to Arica arriving at the Regiment after 18.00.

Now I would be the one to receive a surprise because we had arrived on December 7th and the anniversary of the Rancagua Regiment was December 9th. Everybody was preparing for the festivities. For this reason I went to my house at once. When I arrived and knocked at the door, my wife opened the door and closed it immediately. She had not recognized me, because I looked like a tramp, unshaven, dirty and with my clothes in rags after eighteen days of sleeping on the floor and eating badly. I had to assure her from the street, that it was her own husband at the door, before she let me in.

I ordered them to fill a tub full of hot water, and after bathing, shaving and curing the blisters from the cold on my face, I looked fairly presentable. My wife made a package of my clothes and burnt them in the yard. They were in such a state that they could not be used again.

After this journey we celebrated the anniversary of the regiment with a successful party. I received a telegram a few days later from the Director of the War Academy. He offered me the post of teacher of Military Geography and Geopolitics in that institute. After talking with the Commander of the Regiment, I accepted the position. It was an honorable appointment.

My destination to the War Academy came out in the February issue of the Official Bulletin. We decided to stay in Arica for the holidays, to prepare the packing of the furniture to be taken to Santiago and to accept the numerous farewell parties given by our friends and the officers of the unit.

The Commander of the Regiment sent me off the first week of March. Our household goods were already packed and before March 15th we had returned to Santiago and settled in our house.

In the War Academy I was received by Colonel Alberto Green Baquedano, a senior officer whom I had the opportunity to meet in the course of my career.

CHAPTER II

At the War Academy and the Office of the Undersecretary of War

We spent our holidays in Arica making good use of the beaches and of the January and February sun. My destination appeared initially in the Official Bulletin and the order of the regiment sent me off at the beginning of March. We were all rather sad to leave that land where we had enjoyed such a pleasant stay. We had spent happy days there, going to the valleys of the interior, enjoying the farms with their olive plantations and vegetables, travelling to Tacna to taste the excellent stewed chicken in the shop of don Agustín. I think my elder children will always remember with pleasure those happy days when we lived in Arica. That is why we were all rather sad to leave the north.

During those days our friends were extremely affectionate. We did not rest for a moment from the numerous parties offered by friends and officers, both those we had met before and those with whom we had become friends during our stay. We were given many souvenirs which allow us to evoke a happy period in our lives.

The Unit sent me off at the end of February and as we had already packed the furniture, the preparation for the journey was very fast and we soon were in condition to embark for Valparaíso en route to Santiago.

In this city we arrived to settle in our house of Ortuzar Avenue. The tenants had given it back in time, but it was in such a sad state that we were obliged to make many repairs and changes: the bathroom appliances, the kitchen and the electric installations. We also had it painted, which

made life very uncomfortable during March. It could be said the house was in good condition only in April.

We used those first days to register our children in the School. The girls would attend the Carmelite Nuns' School near Plaza Egaña and the boy would go to a private school very near our house.

The Monday following my arrival I presented myself at the Direction of the War Academy and, after following the established procedure, I went to the office of Alberto Green, the Colonel-Director.

After talking for a while, he examined my curriculum vitae and told me I would teach Military Geography to the first and second year of Staff officers. If I wished it I could also give my Logistics course as assistant teacher to the second year. As I had time available I accepted his suggestion, and from the beginning of the course I started to teach Logistics to the second year as assistant. The regular teacher was my classmate in the Military Academy, Major Gustavo Dupuis. A few days later the Sub-Director, Lieutenant Colonel Sepúlveda, offered me the post of auxiliary teacher of the Air Force Academy, where he was regular teacher in this subject.

A providential escape

An incident I always remember happened on Tuesday 13th of April, when I was unable to travel to Arica with Air Force Captain Fernando Rojas Mercado in a Douglas 956. I had met him when he was pilot of the Military Labour Corps and had to go to Arica regularly. We had become very good friends. He invited me to travel with him in a plane which would go first to Iquique and then would continue to Arica.

As I still had some of my belongings in Arica I thanked him and accepted his invitation, but the trip would be conditioned on the possibility of a change in my schedule of classes. I was unable to do so, and had to cancel my trip. He phoned me to my house on April 12th at 10.30 p.m. to insist on his invitation, but I answered that it was impossible because on the following day I had four periods of classes.

On the morning of Tuesday 13th, the radios started giving news of the accident of the Douglas 956 aeroplane which had crashed in Alto de Batuco after catching fire during flight. Everybody on board had died, passengers and crew. Fate had again saved me from death. I was very sorry about the death of Fernando Rojas, but that is life.

I was named auxiliary teacher of Geopolitics in the Air Force War Academy during the first fortnight of May. Unfortunately, I was not paid for my work that year due to a bureacratic regulation I did not fulfill due to ignorance: the signature of the attendance book for auxiliary teachers.

Everything went on smoothly during the period I worked as Geopolitics teacher. While I prepared classes I felt the need to improve my knowledge about matters of state. I decided, therefore, to study Law. As I did not have my baccaleaurate, I started preparing to take it at the end of the year. I got excellent qualifications which allowed me to apply to the Law School.

In September just after the national holidays, I was called by the Undersecretary of war, Colonel Horacio Arce Fernández, whose adjutant I had been in the Military Academy in 1944. He told me he wished to take me on as his adjutant. I answered that I felt very proud he had remembered me, but I pointed out to him that as a teacher I could not leave my courses just at the end of the year. He replied I would have every facility to carry out my duties both at the War and Air Force Academies. I kindly requested him to talk first with Colonel Green before I accepted, which he did. On October 4th I was named adjutant to the Undersecretary of War, and took up the post at once.

As soon as I assumed my post, I took care, as usual, to find out about the functions and activities involved. I must add that many times I had to replace him in the confidential section of the Undersecretaryship and as assistant to the Minister.

Neither the Office of the Undersecretary nor the Academy worked on Saturdays. As it was necessary to have an officer on duty in case of any emergency, the four officers who worked there decided to take turns, each of us taking duty one Saturday per month. We used those free Saturdays to go to Melipilla where my father-in-law had bought a farm, and would stay there until Sunday afternoon when we returned to Santiago.

We decided that year to enlarge the house adding a dining room and one more bedroom. Work would begin in February because we had to lift almost the whole roof as a result of the new plan of the house. Everything went smoothly during that month, but the builder did not put a temporary zinc roofing while the work was in progress.

While we were in Melipilla one Sunday in February it started to rain. We decided to return to Santiago as a matter of prudence. We started to put corrugated sheets on the roof to protect the furniture stored in a bedroom. We had been there no more than two hours when a torrential rain with thunder and lightning started. Water entered into the house in torrents; all our efforts to cover our belongings were in vain. That night which my children got to remember as the "tragic night of the Pinochets" everything got wet. The only dry place was the corner of a room in which we put two beds and slept as we could all piled together. I have many times thought about the poor, who suffer this kind of situation permanently, and remember thinking how to assist them to alleviate this problem.

During my time with the Undersecretary of War the military deliberations known as the "Línea Recta" and the famous "Tea of Dublé Almeyda street" took place. What had happened? A group of officers had been invited to the house of President Ibáñez. It seems that during the meeting they talked about politics, and there were some disloyal persons who talked more than they should have. In short, many generals, colonels and some senior officers who occupied high positions were called into retirement for that reason.

Colonel Arce was appointed Head of the Military Mission in Washington at the end of the year. Once again I was seeing my chief off, just as I had done when I was in the Military Academy and he was head of the military course. We received as new Undersecretary, Colonel Humberto Zamorano González, an officer I knew from the Military Academy, where he had been my instructor in Telecommunications. I was very glad with his appointment because he was a person I knew well. The period I served under his orders was very pleasant. He was always a friendly man who took care to fulfill his duties and to make others do so too in the best possible way.

As we had Saturday free I was able to study other subjects to improve my knowledge. Thus I entered Law School in 1955.

During the period I was in the Office of the Undersecretary of War, I met many politicians who most of the time were asking favours for themselves or for their constituents. During the period when recruits were called up, cards and letters of request were so numerous we could have issued a printed form for the innumerable applications of those who wished a postponement or a removal from the lists.

Classes in the University started in March. I found time to study throughout that year, especially between 18 and 21 p.m. while Colonel Zamorano worked in his office or had audience with the Minister. I used that time to read the law subjects. As I had registered as a regular student, I talked with each of my teachers to ask them for authorization to attend classes only whenever my work allowed it. My request was granted. I always counted on with the kindness and assistance of those teachers who today are my friends: Fernando Campos Harriet and Benjamín Cid.

In this way I carried on my activities as a law student, attending classes at different hours when time allowed it. The most useful subject for my teaching work were Roman and Constitutional Law.

I was always able to carry out my duties and Colonel Zamorano never had a reason to complain of my work. At the end of that year I gave my exams in the University and I got honours in almost all the subjects. I passed to the second year with great satisfaction of my wife an myself.

On December 4th 1955 I served as adjutant to the Minister of Defense, General Benjamín Videla, as part of a group of officers who accompa-

nied President Ibáñez to review the final exercises of the joint maneuvers carried out by Army, Air Force and Navy units.

I found Arica absolutely changed thanks to the Free Port. Every kind of merchandise was sold there, and 21 de Mayo and 18 de Septiembre Streets had become open air markets.

After attending a final critique of the exercises and a lunch for the authorities, we returned to Santiago.

At the beginning of 1956 Colonel Zamorano informed me that I would be assigned to a post in the Republic of Ecuador. I was to go to the Army War Academy of that country as a teacher. I was part of a mission of six officers, of whom I was the most junior. It was to last a minimum of two years with the possibility of extending it for two more. Colonel Zamorano told me he was sorry to let me go, but it that it was an important step in my career and would prove a great economic benefit for my family. He asked me to reccomend him a replacement and, four days later, I presented him with a list of the three names.

The first days of March I was assigned by Decree N° 766 to the Military Mission of Chile in the United States, so as to be sent on commission as military teacher to the War Academy of Ecuador as from April 1st, ceasing in my functions in the Office of the Undersecretary of War.

Upon the announcement of my transfer I was given a very affectionate and moving farewell by the Undersecretary of War, the officers and civilian personnel. On that occasion they gave me a small bust of O'Higgins which still reminds me of a pleasant period in my professional life. A few days later the Minister of Defense and his cabinet offered my wife and me a farewell dinner at the Club de la Unión.

We embarked with my family in the Italian liner "Marco Polo" of the Italian Navigation Company. Together with us came Major Matus and the families of Lieutenant Colonels Casals, Schaffhausser and Gorigoitía with whom we spent almost four years in Ecuador. A new professional stage opened before us.

CHAPTER III

Service Commission in the Republic of Ecuador

We started preparing our journey to Ecuador as soon as my destination came out. I talked with every person who was acquainted with that country so as to obtain information about the way of life in Ecuador, what to take and what was unnecessary. Thus I learnt about the country and its inhabitants. I considered the possibility of taking some furniture so as not to rent a furnished house, which, I was told, was very expensive. I wished to save the most I could during my stay. I decided therefore to take only the minimum of furniture necessary, and to buy the rest locally or order it from the United States.

On April 12th we embarked, as I said, on the Italian ship "Marco Polo". The sailing was very pleasant, and rest, reading and meditation made the trip shorter. About forty young people of jewish origin were travelling on board, on their way to Israel to work for their future homeland.

The ship stopped in Callao, where had the opportunity of visiting the port and then continued to Lima to have lunch. We returned to Callao where we embarked again and continued the navigation until the island of Puná where we were transferred to a barge called "Rosita". In this barge we travelled along the river Guayas up to Guayaquil where we disembarked only with our suitcases. The furniture was sent later by train to Quito.

During our stay in Guayaquil we spent the night in the Hotel Metropolitano. The first night my son suffered the attack of the mosquitoes which came into his room through a small hole in the net which protected his

window. They attacked him mercilessly and left his face in a terrible state. Because of this he had a high temperature and we had to call a doctor; luckily nothing else happened. We stayed two days in Guayaquil during which we visited the city. We then boarded a Panagra plane which covered the route from Guayaquil to Quito, together with the other families.

During the flight the majority of the relatives of the members of the mission had problems with the altitude, but among the children only one was sick.

Ambassador Cubillos and all the members of the Embassy were waiting for us in Quito, they took us to the Embassy to have lunch. I remember I hardly had anything to eat, the altitude had also affected me that day. It was a generalized problem; we were all dizzy or sick. We recovered quickly and two days later we were all perfectly well. You must not forget Quito is 2.815 meters above sea level. After lunch we settled in the Embajador Hotel in Colón Avenue. In the afternoon we started looking for a house to rent.

We later visited many houses offered by an estate agent but we did not decide on any. Only on the third day of our search did we find a house offered by some maiden ladies at a fairly high rent, but lower than the furnished ones. The ladies lived at the foot of the house in another property. We took the house and settled there.

Very soon we had problems because we noticed that the owners spied upon us, observing everything we did. When the children climbed a wall or put their heads out of the windows, they would come at once to complain that the children were deteriorating the house. I therefore decided to look for another place where we could settle without being subject to intrusion.

Furnished houses were about 1.200 or 1.300 dollars a month whereas the unfurnished ones came down to $ 600. We could thus save a considerable amount of money. While searching we arrived at a house on the top of a hill with a very lovely view, whose rent was only $ 400. It suited us perfectly. The children were accepted in the school as unregistered pupils because classes started in August.

We presented ourselves to the chiefs of the Ecuadorean Army before starting our teaching activities. One of the first assigned tasks we had to carry out was to travel throughout the country. As a Geography teacher I longed to do so, not only to have a clear idea of how the country lay, but also to be able to apply that knowledge to my teaching of the geography of the country. After we had completed the programs of the different subjects which had to be approved by the General Staff, we began our trip through Ecuador.

We started from Quito southwards until we reached Loja; then we returned to Cuenca and descended the mountain till Pasaje and from there

to Puerto Bolívar continuing to Durán finishing this stage in Guayaquil. We went through a great part of the peninsula bordering the coast and completed the reconnaisance with short trips. After we had gone through the coastal zone we started to reconnoitre the eastern jungle region. At the end of a month we knew the country fairly well.

This trip lasted 28 days and it allowed us to visit the most important places shown on the map. It was very useful for the military teachers who could thus apply in their classes the direct knowledge of the difficult geography of that country.

We were also asked to write textbooks for the different subject. It was a job which took up most of our time.

Classes in the War Academy started the first days of October. The Director was a Colonel who took every opportunity to remark that he was against the idea of bringing Chilean teachers to Ecuador. He would have preferred Brazilian teachers who would have come free. We, instead, were a burden on the national budget. Luckily for us this Colonel did not stay long, and was replaced by Colonel López, an excellent person with great capacity for work and remarkable professional knowledge.

I had difficulties with the first director on two opportunities. Once he had called me to his office to tell me I was asking my students "classified" information, which was forbidden. I merely replied that if Ecuador had engaged my services it was because I was a reliable person and that what I had asked my students was in the rulebooks which were public. We had a discussion. As he insisted in his point of view, I told him: "Look, sir, you are wrong, because everything I have asked is public information". To this he answered: "Okay, but you must understand all these subjects are classified". "Very well" – I replied –"I will not ask the course any subject containing these matters".

This Colonel had a strong personality which was a permanent cause of friction. I think I did not make a good impression on him.

With the new Director, Colonel López, we worked in harmony and did not have any problems during the period of classes. He gave us the mission of preparing a strategic war game which we carried out in front of the Quito Garrison and with the attendance of the Minister of National Defense. This same Minister died two days later of a heart attack while bathing in the sea in Playas.

The first days of August I received the legalized documents from the University of Chile which allowed me to register in the second year of Law in the University of Quito. I did not have problems that year, because the two teachers with whom I had classes early in the morning, accepted the authorization I had obtained to arrive slightly late. My problem started the second year, when I was forced to reduce my attendance to classes because of increased duties in the War Academy. This was not accepted

by the university authorities, and I therefore decided to abandon my studies. Besides, by now I had a better knowledge of those subjects which had prompted me to study Law.

In the Academy I was in charge of Geopolitics, Military Geography and Information. I wrote three textbooks for these subjects which I finished during my first year of work (1956-1957). They were modified and corrected during the second year (1957-1958) to put them up to date.

In October the Colonel Undersecretary invited Colonel Mancilla and myself to visit Cuenca, to attend the inauguration of a new housing estate. We accepted delighted. We made the trip in a C-47 plane. I noticed that the houses of the officers of that Southern Garrison were very comfortable. There, I was also able to appreciate the serious problem caused by an excessive number of graduates, which is what happened in the University of Cuenca, whose graduates had to work in any available job to live. You could find doctors who operated men's clothing shops, and lawyers who ran bookshops.

At the beginning of December 1956 we made our first trip south with the first year students. We stayed in Cuenca and then in Loja where we had the opportunity of seeing how the Commander of the Garrison decorated His Excellency the President of the Republic, José María Velasco Ibarra. This ceremony was followed by a fairly long speech which lasted about three hours.

After this trip we returned to Quito and continued with our classes. it was the end of 1956, but we continued working until the end of the academic year, holidays being in June and July. The class was very numerous and the great majority of the students were Colonels. It was rather difficult to teach people whose concept of the profession was already formed, but all of them were very interested in learning the subjects we were teaching. The year ended with the graduation ceremony of the first year officers and their promotion to the second year.

The second term of that year we deeply regretted the death of the Colonel Sub-Director, an agreeable person who always took care to solve any problem a teacher had.

The Staff course lasts two years in Ecuador, which meant that we had to teach within that period of time all the subjects taught over three years in the Chilean War Academy. To do this we prepared new programs which were approved by the Ecuadorean General Staff.

We went through every topic, sometimes very summarized, but covering everything. Many officers, who were not used to such demanding training, would normally have failed. However, the majority worked hard and succeeded and were thus able to continue serving in the Army of Ecuador.

In the United States of America

At the end of the year we were given a few days holiday which we used to visit together with our wives some beautiful places in Ecuador. We very much liked the part of Lacatungo and Ambato, which we would normally visit on Sundays with the Gorigoitías and our children. In Lacatunga we bought the famous layered cheese, which is very tasty and made in layers and then rolled up.

We used those holidays to arrange the house: we revised the textbooks we had presented for the first year, prepared those for the second year, accepted an invitation and prepared a trip to the United States, which I knew only as far as Miami, and this trip would allow me to know the eastern and central zones of that great country.

The journey was very interesting and during the trip we visited various forts. They explained us their instruction programs, showed us the new materials in use and the characteristics of some weapons. I can say this invitation was very useful for all the Ecuadorean and Chilean teachers.

During the journey we stayed five days in Washington where we paid our respects to our Ambassador, Sergio Gutiérrez Olivos, and to the Ambassador of Ecuador in the United States. We also visited museums and libraries. We also spent a whole morning in the Pentagon where we were given a talk on its activities in general. From Washington we travelled to New York where we spent two days. We decided with my friend Francisco Gorigoitía to have something to eat before going to the cinema, and for this we chose a self-service restaurant. We queued and started to fill our trays until we arrived to a cook who handed the meat. I just said "meat", to which he answered me something in English; I repeated the word "meat"; he insisted and when he got the same answer back he refused to continue but signalled to the person following me, and I was left unattended. I was fuming and called aloud: "You Gringo, h.... –and here I used a Chilean expletive – "I am asking for meat". The cook did not even blink. Then a door leading to the kitchen opened and somebody asked me: "Chilean?"? "Yes" I replied. "Fellow countryman, how happy I am to see a Chilean. Come in and take a seat, I will serve you". Thus we did with Gorigoitía, then this person came and explained to me the chef had been asking me if I wanted the meat well cooked, medium or rare. He then proceeded to take our order and marked in the card what we wanted. In a short while he arrived with our trays full of food and drink. It was terribly hot in New York during July, and the soft drinks we had were never enough.

The Chilean cook came to sit with us, and told us he came from Valparaíso. He asked many things abouth Chile. He had become an American citizen, had fought in Korea and was married to an American woman

with whom he had three children, all grown-ups and college graduates. He owned four apartments in that city.

At the end of our meal he asked for our cards and marked them with a small amount which did not correspond to what we had eaten. He told us he was doing this for us not to have trouble when we left, because we were his guests. He accompanied us to the door and returned to his work while we went away very well fed. The following day we travelled by train from new York to Washington to know the countryside. From Washington we travelled to El Paso, Texas where we were received in Fort Bliss. In the afternoon of that day we went to Juárez, a Mexican town separated from El Paso by a bridge. There is a contrast between the cleanliness, order and tidiness of the American city, with the dirtiness, smell and prostitution of Juárez. Seeing these differences, one understands why Americans despise Latin Americans. We flew later from El Paso to Dallas and thence to Miami, from where we all returned to Ecuador.

We started the second year in the War Academy of Ecuador which was now to be called Academy of the Ecuadorean Armed Forces. The first period which had been very hard the previous year, was now even more so. We would remain with the first year, plus the second years where our old students were, and an Information Course. Thus we had three courses and classes practically all the time.

We had prepared the respective textbooks during the first year and while on holidays we had revised them and prepared the ones we were going to use now.

The officers in the new course were younger and better qualified than the ones we had the first year. We also had to do, in the second year, and Administration or Services course, to prepare officers from Administration and Health Corps on staff subjects. All of them were excellent professionals, as also were our students in the second year of the Academy. This made our work very much easier.

In August my fourth child was born in Santiago, Chile. We named him Marco Antonio. He arrived after many years without a baby in the family, which made us all very happy.

Our life in Ecuador went on smoothly. We had a normal social life and an intense professional activity. At the end of three years we travelled to the eastern part of the country, which is a jungle zone and very interesting. We visited the villages of the interior where our attention was drawn to the inhabitants, their way of life, their food and the way they moved through the jungle.

The Official Bulletin N° 28 of the Chilean Army of July 1959 carried the information that our mission in Ecuador was over. I was assigned to the General Headquarters of the First Division of the Army.

During August and September 1959 we were given numerous farewell parties by our friends in Ecuador, when they showed us great affection. I was awarded the medals of Staff officer, Military Professor and the Abdón Calderón order. I still keep a great affection for Ecuador and its people.

On September 9th my daugther Jacqueline was born. I had arrived in Chile 48 hours before. Ecuador had meant for me the arrival of two more children, and a period of intense work and study for almost four years, which allowed me to know fairly well the people of that country.

I arrived at Antofagasta on September 24th and presented myself to the Commander of the Division. I was assigned to the General Headquarters of the North Military Region, which extended from the boundary with Perú to the limit of the province of La Serena. I was starting with this a new stage in my professional life.

CHAPTER IV
General Headquarters of the First Division

The High Command assigned me to the General Headquarters of the First Division, whose Commander-in-chief, General Julio Vargas, appointed me to the General Headquarters of the Northern Military Region where I took over the Intelligence and Operations section. This post was handed over by Commander Daniel Orellana. I at once began to study the plans which were being then carried out. I was the beginning of October 1959.

The tasks carried out in the General Headquarters required the presence of Navy and Air Force officers, for which we asked those services to appoint officers in the Northern region.

I had difficulty in finding a house; after looking for one for about a fortnight I decided to rent one in Brasil Avenue, in spite of its ruinous condition. Before moving in it was first totally arranged: I asked the Health Service to fumigate it several times; I had it painted and also fixed the water pipes and drains. You cannot be choosy in times of need, and as there were no houses for rent in Antofagasta you had to take what you found. We could not ask for any kind of help from the military command.

My family stayed in Santiago while the house was being readied. The family was only reunited in November. We made good use of the beach in summer from December to March. In 1960, my children were enrolled in the School of the Oblate Congregation which was co-educational.

My job in the General Headquarters became more interesting every day, and due to my intelligence activities I was permanently travelling in

the zone between Arica, which was a free port, and Copiapó. I took my family whenever there was any chance to do so. My elder children were rather independent; thus the younger ones became our travel companions.

We made some good friends in Antofagasta, many of whom had known my parents-in-law when they lived in that city, and knew my wife since her childhood.

However I had to face a very difficult moment that could have been fatal. My daughter Jacqueline suddenly fell ill with pneumonia, and was saved by a doctor who had arrived from Santiago only two days before. The local doctors who had attended her, had misdiagnosed the illness thinking it was asthma. Thanks to the cares of doctor Cortesse, she escaped death when she was only one year old.

After the illness of my daughter and when she had recovered almost completely, I travelled to Bolivia to visit my sister, going through La Paz up to Lake Titicaca.

On my return to Antofagasta I continued with my work in the Northern Military Region. In November 1960 I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and continued in the same job in the General Headquarters of the First Division. During those days I received a polite note in which I was proposed as member of the Bolivarian Institute of Antofagasta, which I accepted with pleasure.

On January 1960 I was named Commander of the Infantry Regiment N° 7 "Esmeralda". The post was handed over by Commander Lezaeta, a distinguished officer I had known in the Infantry School in 1940 when we were in the same Company. I had served with him afterwards in the Military Academy. These contacts made the handing over of the unit easier.

The Regiment had caught fire some time ago. A building was now being constructed in the new grounds, and the Office of the Commander occupied a very run-down room in the remains of the old barracks.

What pleased us most about the new assignment was the fact that we were moving into a more decent and comfortable house for our children. It was the first time in my career that I occupied a state-owned house.

CHAPTER V
Commander of the Infantry Regiment N° 7 "Esmeralda"

A new barracks for the "Esmeralda" Regiment

When I assumed the command of the regiment I established as first priority the transfer as soon as possible of the whole unit to the new barracks which were being built in the southern part of Antofagasta between the Artillery regiment and the Cavalry Unit "Exploradores".

The previous Commander had inaugurated a block of buildings which had been finished, and the construction of another had been started. Great was my surprise, however, when I discovered that those buildings could not be used because they had no sewage system. Therefore it was necessary to install the drain pipes and join them to the main sewer about 2.500 meters away and then continue with the building of the N° 2 block.

I called in technicians from Santiago and we marked the ditch across the front yard of the Artillery regiment with a length of about 300 to 350 meters, to be joined later to the main sewer. To dig the ditch through which the pipes would run, we had to cut through black rock, which would normally require several blasts of dynamite and other explosives. However, if used, the explosion would have broken the windows in the neighbourhood or cut the electric wires.

We started the work with the contingent of recruits which we transferred every day after breakfast from barracks N° 1 to barracks N° 2. Lunch was provided by the mobile kitchens and a guardhouse was installed in tents at the entrance of the work site.

The new Commander of the Division was General Héctor Martínez Amaro an officer who because of his personality, sterness and rectitude was a model in the Army. After I talked with him about the work and about the change of contingent of recruits that would be coming to the unit, he approved my plan of carrying out their instruction until the review of recruits and then continue with the sewage work, so that the unit could move in for its anniversary. He also told me these men would not go on maneuvers.

I hastened the work on the sewage system announcing that if it was finished before July 31st the men would get a month's leave.

The work took a feverish rhythm, with shifts the twenty four hours of the day. We installed light beams which allowed us to work at night. There were 14 days left for July 31st when Major Fernández, the second Commander of the unit, came to inform me that the work was finished.

I sent off the contingent on leave until August 30th, as I had promised. During those days the concrete tubes and the ring joints to link them together were brought.

When the contingent returned General Martínez called me to say that as from September 1st, I should start preparing the unit for the parade during the National Holidays Festivities. I pointed out the transfer of the unit would be then delayed but that the order would be carried out.

The installation of the sewage system was finished in August, and we tested it to see if it worked, the first days of September. It was approved by the Direction of Sanitary Works at the end of that month.

The unit stopped the work and started to train to carry out the order given by General Martínez. The conscript workers paraded fairly well, and after this they went on leave until October 2nd.

October 25th was the anniversary of the Regiment, and we celebrated it by moving from the old barracks to the new one. The kitchen and a wing of the dining room were finished during those days and were ready to be used. Everything was working perfectly well when I received a new order from the commander of the Division: we were to take part in the end-of-the-year maneuvers. I pointed out that the troops were not prepared to participate in those exercises but that I would try to carry out the order in the best possible way. When I was coming out from his office, he called me back to tell me I would act as Commander of the "Blue Party" troops which would fight against the northern "Red Party" men between the ravine of Tarapacá and the Loa river.

I immediately started to train the unit for the maneuvers, together with preparing the vehicles which would take part in the exercise. The

contingent had to receive a hurried combat instruction which allowed us to carry out the maneuvers normally.

The construction of the two blocks was finished at the end of the year. I moved there the offices of the commander, part of the kitchen and equipped the north wing of the dining room. Work had been hard but the satisfaction was enormous. On that occasion I ordered the officer in charge of the construction, Lieutenant Dinator, to build the guardroom of the Regiment and to arrange the mangers and stables as officers mess and poultry farm. This building was in the high part of Antofagasta, so the architect who was advising us, made a drawing with all the possible arrangements we could wish and we started the work.

As I had some days of holidays left I travelled to Santiago to talk with high-echelon officer friends and solve some of the problems of the unit. Thus I obtained beds, mattresses, food, clothing and equipment and six trucks with which I returned to Antofagasta. I also got the staff of the contingent duplicated, and that I should be assigned a group of young officers as instructors.

We worked that year in buildings. We finished the kitchen and the guardroom which was immediately installed. The guardroom had been built by Lieutenant Dinator with the savings made in the other constructions, and, thus, the room had involved no extra expenditure. We were congratulated by the Commander of the Division for all these achievements, which was very unusual of him.

The regiment formed again with the troops which paraded in the National Holidays Festivities and after the leave we moved to the Oficina Chacabuco for the period of field instruction. We stayed in that area during the whole of October.

Maneuvers in the North

On our return we started preparing the end of the year maneuvers of the Division. The unit managed to get ready to go on maneuvers in practically fifteen days, and I found nothing to complain about when I reviewed the basic units and the officers. However as we needed to collect funds for the "Soldier's Christmas" I prepared a one-week tour to the mining camps in Tocopilla, María Elena and Pedro de Valdivia. During this tour the men made public presentations of gymnastics, wrestling, choir, sport competitions, etc. The admission charges collected provided sufficient funds for the regiment, and we were even able to pass on some of our takings to the General Headquarters of the Division for their Christmas celebration.

On that occasion General Martínez attached me to the General Headquarters of the maneuvers. Unfortunately, I was only there for a week, because I suffered a case of food poisoning, probably as a result of some

stale seafood which I ate, and was transferred to the hospital of María Elena. I stayed there during almost all the maneuvers period, and was later evacuated to Antofagasta. Afterwards we were given holidays.

During that leave we visited Calama and then San Pedro de Atacama. It allowed the children to have a change of weather and scenery.

I began my third year as commander of the regiment in 1963, and little by little I added more buildings and new installations to improve the comfort of the unit. I think that year was more rewarding than the previous one. We carried out a thorough instruction, and I was also able to develop a pleasant relation with the civilian population of the city. In 1961 I had assumed the post of Director of the Instituto Chileno de Cultura Hispánica in Antofagasta. As such, I had the pleasure of attending the Ambassador of Spain in Chile who made a courtesy visit to the city. This contact allowed me to meet the Spanish colony of Antofagasta and share many pleasant moments with them.

Elections were to take place soon, so I instructed the unit how the personnel should act during those events. When in March 1963 I was named Head of Military Forces in Pedro de Valdivia for the Municipal elections of April 7th of that year, the unit was in the best possible conditions to carry out its job.

My last year as Commander culminated with the maneuvers, but now taking part in the General Headquarters of Maneuvers Direction. We concentrated the Division around Quillagua. We Commanders wore gray trousers and a light gray shirt. In that opportunity I had my tent put up in the Loa valley towards the north while the other Commanders stayed in the locality. One day during the preparation of the maneuvers they informed me through one of the adjutants that the following day all commanders had to attend in combat dress and steel helmet. It was, of course, a joke they had prepared for me. As my tent was far away I did not question the order and turned up next day at the meeting place as I had been ordered. They were making fun of me when General Martínez came in and congratulated me for my military spirit while reprimanding them for dressing so lightly.

General Martínez, our Commander-in-Chief, was so demanding during the maneuvers, that everyone was scared of him. One Commander managed to elude him during the whole period. When the General arrived at his command post he always received the same answer: "Sir, Commander X is on such a hill". The General departed towards that hill and when he arrived the commander had moved again elsewhere. He spent most of the period of maneuvers that way.

On another occasion while we were refereeing at the post of a certain commander, a sentinel who was on top of a hill shouted that an enemy column was advancing towards us and that it would surround the post in

thirty minutes. "You must decide, Commander", the head referee said. The decision: "to burn all the documents to prevent them falling into the hands of the enemy" he replied, and did as he said. However when the column was nearer he realized they were his own troops but by then the documents were already fuelling a great bonfire. Now, it was known the General would check all the documents issued during the compaign, so the Commander in question had to put to work all the typists of his general headquarters copying the orders sent to the dependent units.

On our return from the maneuvers I asked permission to make the tour through Tocopilla, María Elena and Pedro de Valdivia once again. It was granted. Thus we obtained, as in the previous year, the necessary funds to celebrate a beautiful soldier's Christmas.

Just before the New year's Eve party, attended by all the garrison, I received a telegram informing me that proceedings were under way to assign me to the War Academy as Sub-Director.

CHAPTER VI
Return to the War Academy

I arrived in Santiago with my family the first days of February 1964. We could not settle down in the new house in Laura de Noves street because the building work was delayed. For this reason we settled in the old house of Ortúzar Avenue which also needed maintenance, because the tenants had not made any repairs and had let it run down completely. The necessary arrangements were soon made, and before three weeks we moved in, though the work went on.

A few days after we settled in the house in Avenida Ortúzar, I presented myself to Colonel Director Juan Forch Petit with whom I had worked when I was Lieutenant in the Military Academy. He gave me a warm welcome, and invited me to a walk through the Academy. I noticed everything looked the same as when I had been there as a pupil and afterwards as a teacher, with the exception of a block of flats for the families of the student officers in the back part of the Institute leading out to García Reyes Street. He showed me with a certain irony the office of the Sub-Director, a dark room, very badly illuminated. After this tour he introduced me to the outgoing Sub-Director, Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Torres, with whom I was friends from the time we were cadets in the Military Academy. We belonged to different branches of the Army which is why we had never come across each other during our careers. We reminisced together about old times. He was handing in his post to an old comrade and would then take up the command of the Artillery Regiment "Maturana".

After a long and enlightening talk with Commander Torres and answering to all my doubts, we had lunch together in the officers mess and in the afternoon he gave me the general instructions for that year and the regulation book. We also agreed to propose to the director the possibility that I should take up the post the following week, so as to finish settling down in my house in Ortúzar Avenue. The request was granted by Colonel Forch.

During those days I studied the general instructions, the regulations and every document of interest to obtain information about the running of the Academy. I assumed my post of Sub-Director of the institution on the last Monday of February.

Activities began the first days of March with a solemn ceremony in the covered courtyard, with all the students and teachers of the Academy present. Colonel Forch introduced me there to the newly arrived officers and bade farewell to those leaving. Later there was a farewell and welcome lunch in the Military Club, where the departing officers received souvenirs of their time in the Academy.

Eduardo Frei becomes President of the Republic

I became teacher of Military Geography and Geopolitics to the first, second and third years of the regular staff course. Classes proceeded normally until the presidential elections of September 1964. I stayed in the Academy while many student officers and some teachers were appointed Heads of Military Forces in different parts of the country, which meant a ten-day interruption in classes. Eduardo Frei was elected President of the Republic, and assumed office in November. To celebrate his election there were numerous social meetings and ceremonies with the attendance of delegations of friendly countries who had come to the inauguration ceremony.

During these days I was named adjutant to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Colombia, Major General Jaime Fajardo Pinzón. I had been with him on some previous occasions, when he had been Military Attaché of Colombia in Chile. As he had left behind many friends and had always shown great affinity with Chilean officers he received many invitations that took up all his time.

During the days I accompanied General Fajardo I met many national and foreign dignitaries. As his adjutant, I was also able to attend the party given at La Moneda –the Presidential Palace– for the occasion. There I saw many retired Army Generals who had registered in the Christian Democratic party, and who now, wearing formal dress, were celebrating the victory.

The change of government brought about many retirements in the Army, among them that of the Commander-in-Chief. We regretted his

departure and held a ceremony in his honor on October 29th 1964 at the War Academy. We expressed our gratitude to General Oscar Izurieta for his work as teacher of the Academy during ten years. Former Directors and teachers of the Academy who had served with General Izurieta were invited to this ceremony as was the Director of Instruction of the Army and numerous Army chiefs.

Mourning for Vietnam

We carried out four succesive strategic war games that year during which we were obliged to spend the night in the Academy. In spite of the trouble involved, it gave us an extraordinary experience in the command and leadership of large units.

I received, in December, the mission to travel as head of the third year course to the United State on a thirty-day trip. The purpose of the visit was to get information and knowledge of the Army of that country.

The trip began on January 14th from Pudahuel airport. We travelled through the eastern and central parts of the United States visiting numerous military installations. It was a useful experience in getting acquainted with the use of the new war material recently available, and also to visit different towns.

The United States were fighting intensely those days in Vietnam. In many of my speeches, I remarked on the gallantry of the American soldier fighting for democracy. On one occasion while we were crossing a town I noticed that on many blocks the houses had flags at half mast which meant the loss of a loved one in the fight against Communism. I stopped before one of those houses and asked the interpreter to allow me to get down from the car and talk to the people there. I was received by an elderly lady who was mourning the death of the her grandson. I offered her our deepest sympathy; she embraced me and thanked me.

In fort Leavenworth we were attended with special deference by the Chilean students and by their tutors. I visited Dallas accompanied by Colonel Harold Frindell whom I had known previously in the same town. I had the opportunity of appreciating the growth and development of that city.

After staying thirty days in the United States we returned to Chile with the positive feeling that though our country had defects it also had a great potential for economic and social development. We analysed this subject in depth in our Geopolitics classes afterwards. We also observed that it was necessary to reduce the effects of the strip-shaped form of Chile, which hindered its harmonic development, through a regional or sectorial system.

Before travelling to the United States, a new Director, Colonel Tulio Marambio Marchant, had been appointed at the War Academy, a chief

for whom I keep a special affection and esteem for his qualities as a teacher and as a human being.

1965 was a year of intense work in the Academy. Four war games were carried out which, as in the previous year, lasted three succesive days. It was strenuous work, but left valuable lessons for both teachers and students regarding the direction of large units and the workings of general headquarters.

General Tulio Marambio was appointed by the Security Council of the United Nations as Military Advisor of the Reconciliation Committee for India and Pakistán. For this reason I was left in charge of the Academy. The end-of-the-year ceremonies were carried out under my command. I replaced him as acting Director of the Academy until March 1966.

On January 12th 1966 Colonel Alfredo Mahn was named as new director of the Academy. He took up the post in March just when General Marambio was returning. On May 1966 I was left again in charge of the Academy while the Director took part in the High Command course between June 21st and July 27th 1966. Colonel Mahn travelled in December in charge of the War Academy course to the United States, just as in the previous year, on an informative visit. The institute was left under my command until his return. On April 1967 our Colonel-Director was promoted to Brigadier General, though he continued in charge of the institute.

During 1967 activities proceeded normally. My promotion to Colonel came out in July, though it should have been dated January 22nd of the year before. A problem had arisen in the Senate when some senators had mistaken me for General Manuel Pinochet who had been in the El Salvador mines where he had faced a difficult situation which had forced him to take strong measures.

Life in the Academy went on smoothly that year. I suggested arranging the basement and the war games room to the General Director. My proposal was accepted, and I immediately ordered the work to begin. It was finished at the end of February 1968.

In September I was appointed Military aide-de-camp to the Minister of National Defense of Ecuador, Agustín Febres Cordero, on the occasion of his official visit to Chile between the 15th and 23rd of September 1967. We established very good relations with the minister, and ended up becoming excellent friends.

25 years of marriage

At the end of the year I was again named head of the delegation of the third year course which would travel in the study trip to the United States. We left on January 9th 1968 and returned thirty days later.

As we were celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary that year I decided to invite my wife to travel with me to the United States. On that trip, we took the opportunity of visiting the most important cultural and artistic centres of that country, when my schedule allowed it. When we travelled to Washington, she spent whole days visiting museums and libraries accompanied by the Huerta family. On our return we happily remembered the pleasant days we had spent there and thanked the affection of our friends, the Huertas, who had the kindness to invite my wife to stay with them in Washington while I made a trip to the central zone of the country.

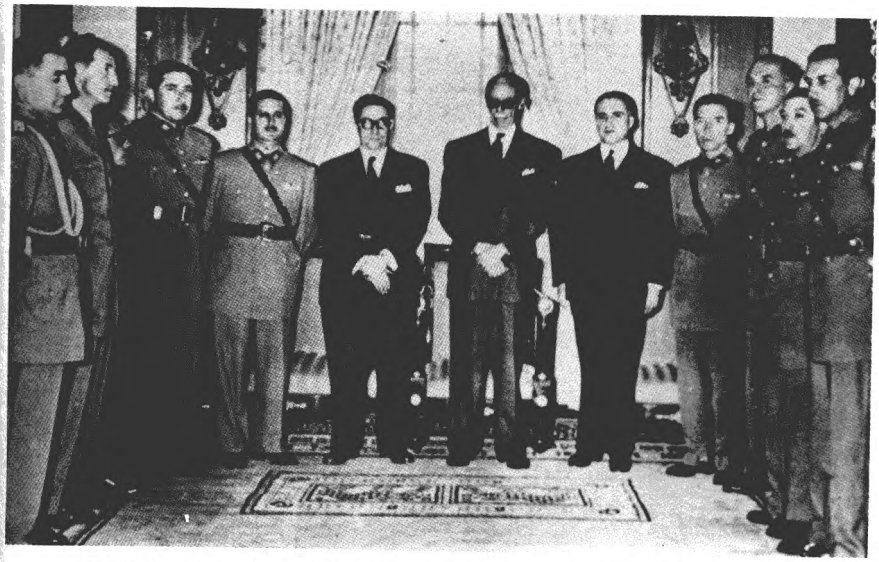
When I returned from the United States I found the Director of the Academy had been replaced by a classmate of the Military Academy. I appreciated him very much, but it was unacceptable that after being Sub-Director they should name Director a person of my own class, and I pointed out this situation to my superiors. As nothing happened, I was considering asking for my retirement when the new Commander of the Second Division, Brigadier General Alfredo Mahn, called me to his office to offer me the post of Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Second Division, which I accepted with pleasure.

Fate once again led me away from a post which could have meant the end of my career, as was the case with the Director. That year the officer of the Academy tendered their resignations due to their precarious situation on account of their low salaries. The High Command would make the Director responsible for this states of affairs. I have often thought that if I had stayed there my promotion to General would have been possibly affected.

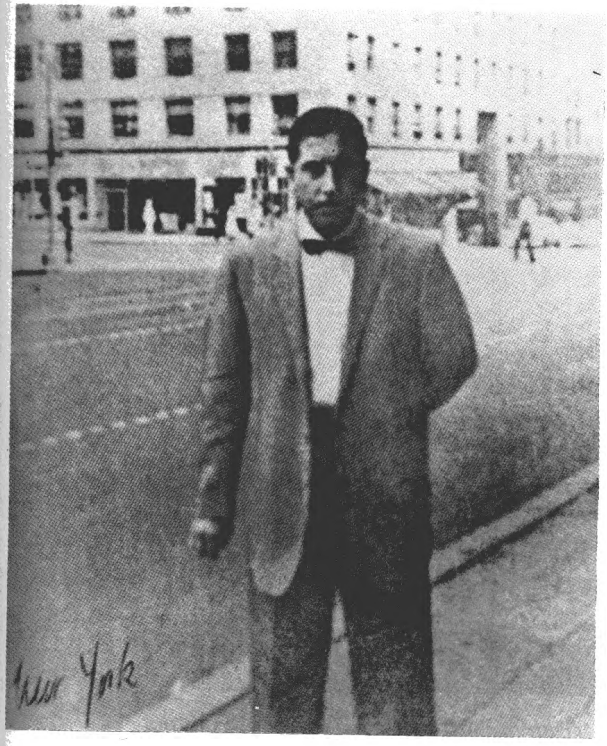
I took up my post as Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Division but first, in March, I prepared the post graduate course which was voluntary. Then I handed over my post in the War Academy to Lieutenant Colonel Agustín Toro, and began my work as Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Second Division.

The Delegation of Instructors bids farewell to H.E. the President of the Republic, 1956.

Travelling to Ecuador with his family, 1956.

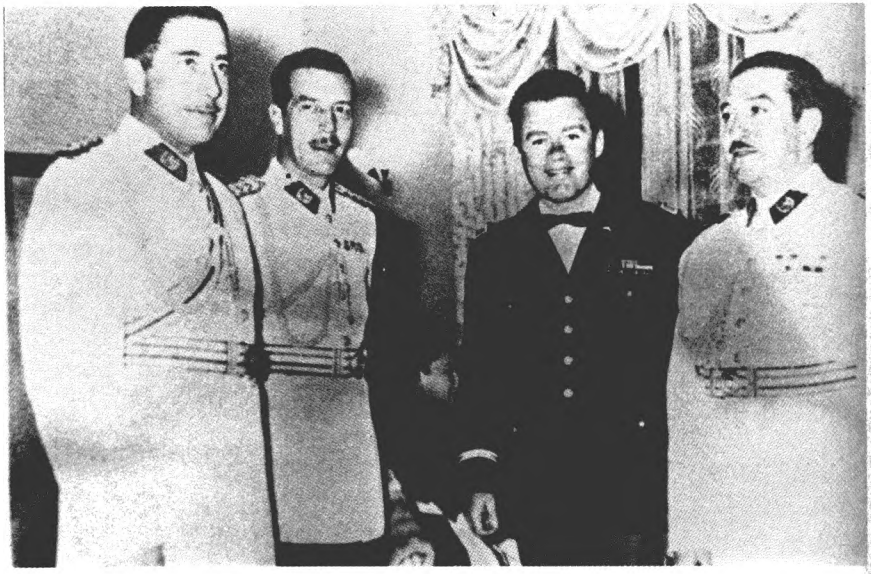


With the President of the Republic of Ecuador J. María Velasco Ibarra.



In New York, 1957.

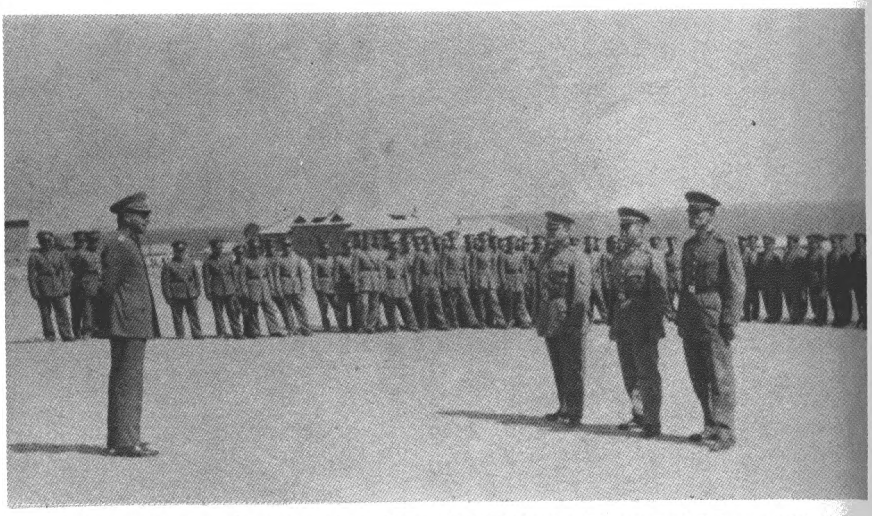
In Fort Benning, 1957.



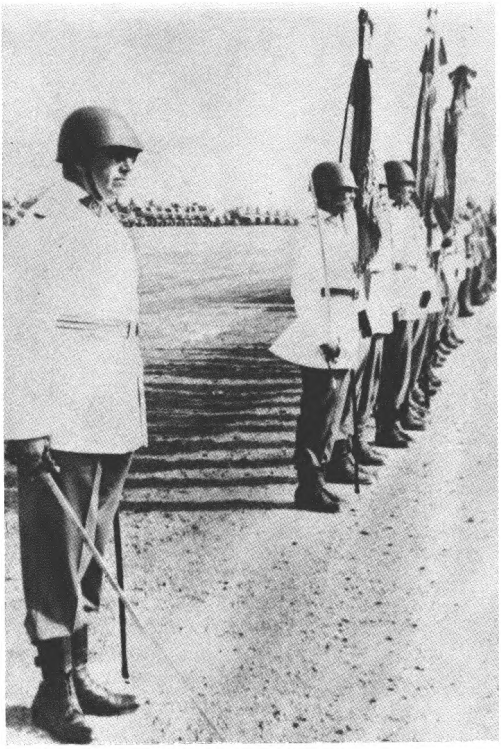
With Colonel Mac Millen of the U.S. Army in Quito, Ecuador, 1957.

At the prize giving and appointment of teacher ceremony in the War Academy of Ecuador, 1958.

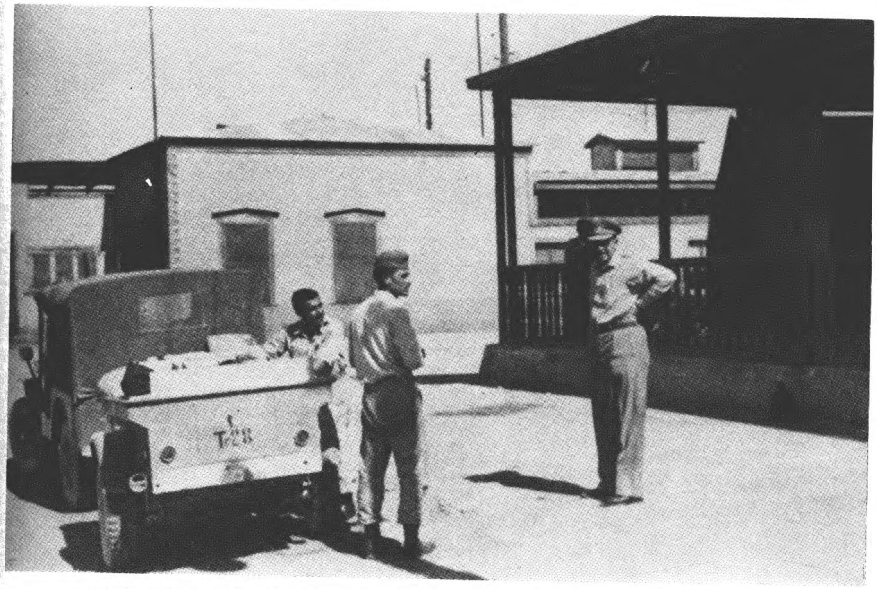
The author as Commander of the Regiment congratulates non-commissioned Officer Polanco for his outstanding works in the Nº 7 Motorized Infantry Regiment "Esmeralda", 1961.



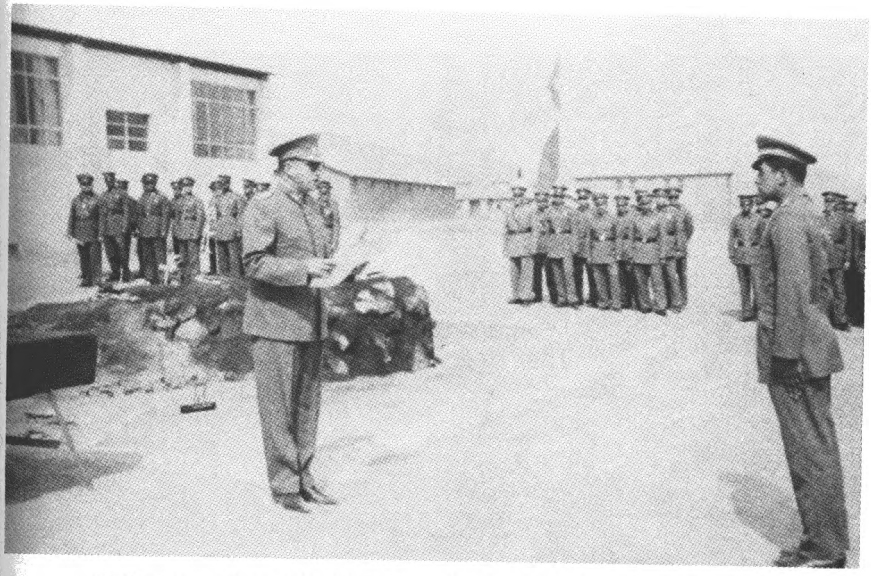
The author as Commander of the Nº 7 Infantry Regiment "Esmeralda" congratulates three non-Commissioned Officers, 1961.



Great Military Parade in the terrains north of Antofagasta, 1962.

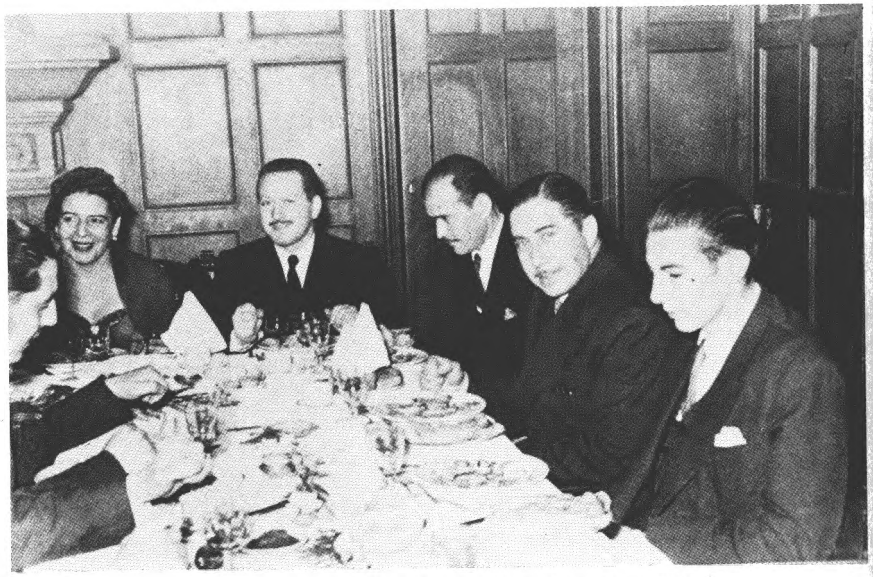


At the General Headquarters of the First Division of the Army on the maneuvers exercises to Sierra Gorda - Loa, 1962.



As Commander of the Nº 7 Motorized Infantry Regiment "Esmeralda" makes the critique on "Assault and Taking of The Morro of Arica", 1962.

At the wedding of a relative, 1963.



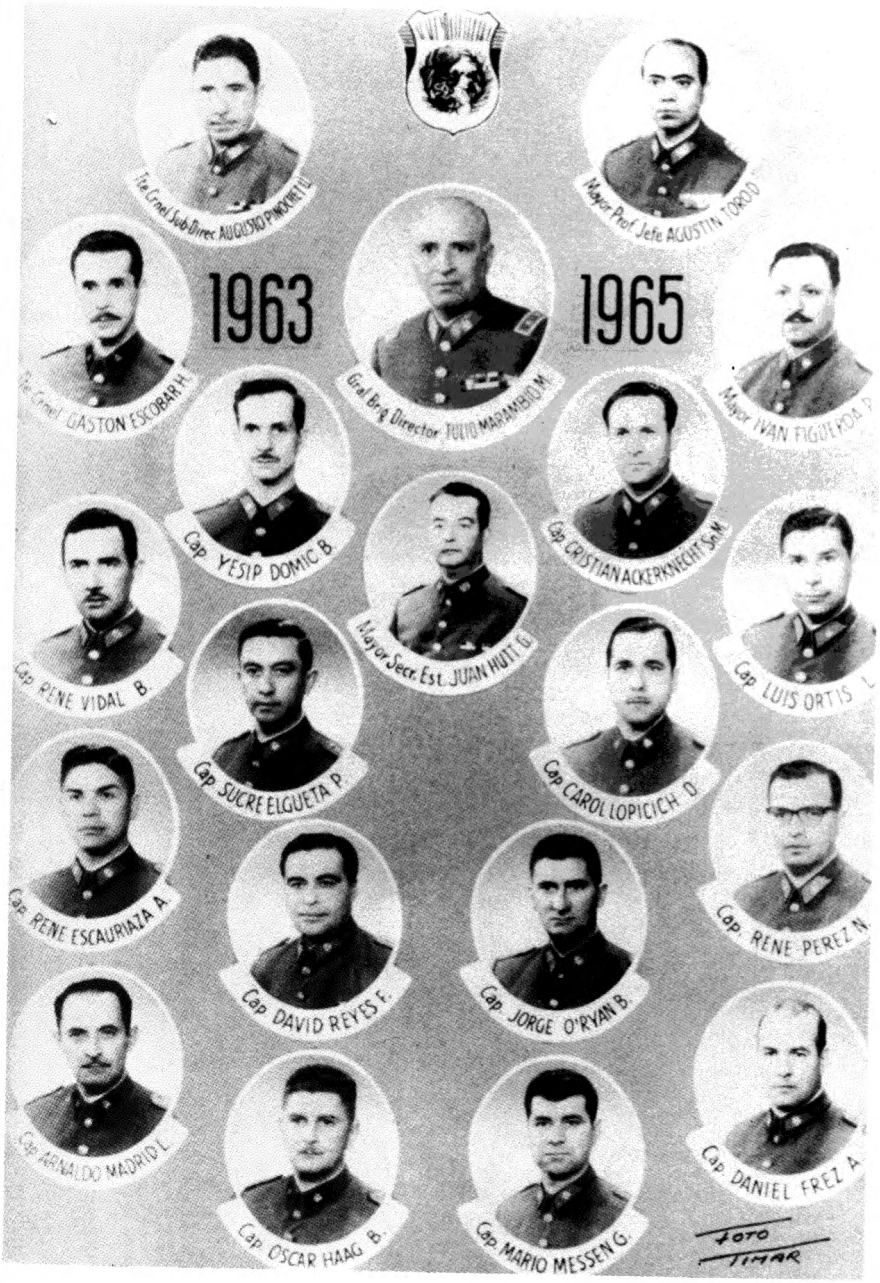
Attending a social event in Antofagasta, 1963.

Adjutant to the Colombian delegation that came to President's Frei Inauguration, 1964.

With the Colombian delegation to President's Frei Inauguration.

With the Colombian delegation to President's Frei Inauguration.

During a social event with the Commander of the First Division.



Sub Director of the War Academy.

A visit to Fort Benning, 1965.

Visiting the Artillery School of the U.S. Army, 1965.

The author as Sub Director of the War Academy.

FOURTH PART
IN THE HIGH COMMAND

CHAPTER I
Chief of Staff of the Army Second Division

It was a great challenge to be Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Second Division. As an operational unit, it covers from La Serena to San Fernando and is the one with the most tactical units. I was sent off from the War Academy at the end of February. I assumed the post immediately, and began to study the work program of the Second Division for 1968.

Discontent in the Armed Forces

A few days after taking up my post, I was enrolled as a student in the High Command course at the National Defense Academy. This activity was to start on May 27th and would finish on August 30th. I took up these studies without leaving my classes as teacher of Military Geography and Geopolitics in the War Academy and my obligations as Head of the Staff. It was hard work but I applied myself to it with enthusiasm.

During the remaining days of February I set about preparing the Annual General Instructions of the Division for that year. The document was fully approved by General Mahn. I also prepared a dossier to present myself to the National Defense Academy course. While I was carrying out these activities there was a sudden change in the High Command of the Army at the beginning of May which caught us by surprise. Not even the

staff working in the Ministry of Defense building, or most of it at least, had any idea or heard any rumors of the possible reasons for these unexpected changes.

These changes affected the command of the Second Division. General Mahn was appointed General Commander of the Military Garrison and was replaced by Brigadier General René Schneider who, after taking charge of the post, called the officers together and told them he approved everything done by his predecessor.

I had known this new Commander-in-chief of the Division as a Lieutenant in the Military Academy. We had always kept excellent relations as friends and officers. His appointment made me feel confident but I regretted the departure of General Mahn with whom I had got on very well since we had worked together in the War Academy for more than two years when he was Director and I Sub-Director. We used to have lunch together every day and would exchange ideas about the work to be carried out in the Academy.

On May 2nd I learnt that there had been changes in the Ministries of Defense, Finance and Economy. The rest of the cabinet members were confirmed. Andrés Zaldivar, who had been both the Minister of Finance and of Economy, remained in the first post; Juan de Dios Carmona was appointed to the Ministry of Economy and retired General Tulio Marambio took up the post of Minister of Defense.

It was learnt later that this ministerial change was due to the resignation of the student officers of the War Academy whose economic situation was so bad, as was that of all the Armed Forces and the Police, that they had felt forced to resign.

The effect of their resignation on the High Command made the Goverment reassess the situation, and to calm things down named Brigadier General Tulio Marambio Minister of Defense. He was a well-known officer, respected and appreciated by the great majority of the Army officers, not only because of his conditions as teacher but also for his human qualities. I must express that in spite of the differences we could have had during the last years, I will always keep a great affection for this General. I trust he will some day understand my position.

In turn, this change brought serious repercussions in the Army High Command. The appointment of Major General Sergio Castillo Aránguiz, hitherto head of the Military Institutes, as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Army, forced General Luis Miqueles into retirement. The change proceeded in a very dignified manner and we never heard any complaints from him about it. Several other Major Generals also left the Army among them Generals Jorge Quiroga, René Cabrera and Rodolfo Abé.

One of the first activities of the new Minister of Defense, General Marambio, was to hold a meeting with all the officer corps of Santiago at

the War Academy. There he told them that, as a soldier, he would look for ways and means to solve the economic problems affecting the members of the Armed Forces and the Police corps. For that he needed 90 days to study, put to date and enact a new regulation in order to increase the salaries of the members of the different institutions. The officers listened to the General, and at the end of the meeting approved his proposition. They would wait for the time the Minister had asked them.

At the end of May I handed over and delegated some of my duties to the Head of Operations of the General Headquarters in order to prepare my documents to enter the High Command course which started on May 27th. Classes were given through lectures by different Government or university personalities. Subjects were analysed and discussed by the students. During the time I attended this course I could not leave my work as Head of the General Headquarters and continued my work in the offices of the Ministry of Defense in the afternoons.

I also had the opportunity to give a lecture on Geopolitics to all the officers of the High Command Course as teacher of that subject in the War Academy. My talk dealt with the foundations of Geopolitics and their application to the case of Chile, a broad subject which obliged me to make a summary without ommitting the essential points. I was congratulated by the Director of the Academy and by the Head of the course.

The course finished on August 30th. and the student officers were sent back to their posts. Thus, I resumed my activities as Head of the Division Staff the following day. I began by making the preparations for the Division before it took part in the Great Military Parade of September 19th. 1968. Five days before the event I had the opportunity to hold the Preparatory Review of all the Santiago Garrison units, and make a critique to their commanders in the Tacna Regiment. After this activity, the Division prepared itself thoroughly and paraded impeccably on September 19th.

One October afternoon I was in my office when a group of officers asked leave to talk with me. It was to tell me to go on that day to the Military Club to vote because I headed the list of candidates for the Vice-Presidency of that Institution. Numerous officers had already voted for me and I was winning the election, as that afternoon was the last day to vote I postponed other activities and went to the Military Club. I was informed later the idea had been of my former students of the War Academy. They had made the campaign without telling me a word. This way they wanted to show their support and affection for me. Thus I joined the Board of Directors of the Club, together with other distinguished officers who carried out a great job to improve the conditions of the club.

Later on October 8th I was elected President of the Cultural Extension Department of the Military Club, a post I took up enthusiastically.

"Reds" against "Blues"

At the beginning of November the General Staff informed us the unit would take part together with the Third Division, the Cavalry Division and the Command of Military Institutes in the great exercises of the end of the year as ordered by the High Command. From that moment all the activity of the unit centered in the preparation of those manoeuvers.

In the General Staff orders it was stated that during these operations the command would rotate and that during the exercises almost all the commands would combine in the majority of echelons as a way to allow the head officers to practice tactical leading of combat and operation units. In this way a greater number of commanders took part in these practises. We disposed of about six operational units and thirty combat units with about 6.000 men.

The manoeuvers were to be carried out in the region between the Mataquito and Rapel rivers, from November 16th to 28th.

The "blue" troops camped to the north, in the Rapel river area. During this first stage they would be led by the Commander-in-Chief of the Second Division, General René Schneider with his General Headquarters. The forces would consist of four infantry regiments, one artillery regiment, one regiment of engineers and a cavalry group. In the second stage General Schneider would be replaced by Brigadier General Camilo Valenzuela keeping the rest of officers and troops in its structure. In the third stage General Valenzuela and myself would be replaced by a new Commander-in-Chief and a new Chief of Staff. The officers who handed over their command passed to the Direction of Manoeuvers until the end of the exercises.

The movement of troops in which I took part were the following: the Commander-in-Chief of the "blue" group, Brigadier General René Schneider, ordered to concentrate the tactic units in the Rapel village - Navidad - Rapel river area, and from there to approach the enemy taking as axis the line Rapel village - Litueche - San Pedro. At the same time it would carry out an encirclement with the cavalry group moving it along the tracks near the coast until coming to the south of San Pedro.

The first day all the displacements were carried out normally in spite of the Air Force which was very active and obliged us to take several measures. The march to the zone of Litueche, also allowed the referees to confirm the degree of instruction and training achieved. There, Brigadier General Camilo Valenzuela took over the command of the Division.

The "blue" group received a new "war situation" in the afternoon. The General Staff of the Division started the work at once, for which we asked information to the Intelligence and Operations departments about our own situation and that of the enemy in that moment.

At 19.00 the head of informations gave us the "state of the enemy" up to that hour. The head of Operations informed us about the situation of our own troops. We immediately began to analyse the situation and the possible courses of action.

At 21.00 the commanders of units were called to a meeting in the command post. They were informed that, according to our informations, the "red" forces were organized in two strong nuclei leaving a very weak center. We proposed the following: the Division should take advantage of the existing situation in the combat front and manoeuver a break-up of the central axis. It was approved by the new Commander-in-chief. This manoeuver was carried out the following day with great success. Our troops practically reached up to the "red" General Headquarters, which was simultaneously attacked by the Cavalry group which fell upon it from the west, which caused the hurried flight of the enemy forces.

This success allowed our general headquarters to move southwards, and we settled in a huge cave in the locality of La Estrella. This hideout made our discovery practically impossible to the "red" aviation. The referees of the manoeuver searched for us almost the whole morning and part of the afternoon before they found us.

The afternoon of that day we received information confirming the victory of the "blues" which caused great joy among the members of the General Staff. We congratulated the commanders who carried out the break-up manoeuver. Next day we were replaced by the new officers, Brigadier General Manuel Pinochet and Colonel Julio Canessa, who came to take our posts as commanders of the "blue" group. The officers of the General Headquarters were sent off to Pichilemu to the Direction of the Manoeuvers.

When we arrived to the hotel in Pichilemu we were given our rooms, and the vehicle brought the campaign box with our personal belongings. After taking a shower and changing clothes, the officers of the "blue" General Headquarters invited me to a barbecue in a house near the village, because it was my birthday. Those were moments of reminiscences and affection, which I thanked from my heart, especially because they had remembered my birthday.

"You are promoted to Brigadier General"

Next morning I met the Minister of Defense, General Tulio Marambio, in the dining-room of the hotel. He was accompanied by other generals. After greeting me affectionately and after talking with me for a while, he led me aside and told me: "You, Pinochet, will be promoted to Brigadier General next month". Deeply moved, I thanked him for the good news and withdrew, keeping to myself this important piece of information, because attaining

this rank means the enormous satisfaction of seeing fulfilled one of your most longed for wishes.

Before returning to the Santiago, the units which had taken part in the exercises paraded in front of the authorities. A few days later we returned to the capital. The units were demobilized and each of them returned to their respective barracks.

Two days later we learnt in the offices of the Second Division, that our Commander-in-Chief, General René Schneider, would be sent as head of the Fifth Division in Punta Arenas. In turn, the Chief of Staff of the Second Division would be sent to command the Sixth Division of the Army in Tarapacá as from December 17th 1968. As I was still a Colonel and not yet Brigadier General, my initial command was interim.

These assignments provided an excuse to organize numerous end-of-the-year and farewell celebrations to the outgoing chiefs. At the beginning of January 1969 I handed over my post as Chief of Staff and prepared my trip north.

On January 23rd I travelled to Iquique by land in a new vehicle which had just been delivered to the Commander of the Sixth Division. My son Augusto accompanied me in this journey as War Material officer, so as to solve any problem during the trip.

When we got to Iquique General Kurt von Hagen was expecting us. I asked him to keep the news of my arrival in reserve and to be introduced to nobody, because I first wanted to get acquainted from the outside with all the activities carried out in that town and in the neighbouring localities. I used those days to learn in detail the functioning of the Unit in the Iquique and Arica Garrisons. I visited all the different installations of the Division and listened to the positive and negative aspects of their activities, their pending needs and the solutions it was necessary to adopt. I took due note of it all.

On January 28th 1969 I took command of the Sixth Army Division in the courtyard of the Carampangue Regiment in a sober ceremony. Brigadier General Kurt von Hagen bade farewell in the same act.

By taking command of a major operative unit in the northern zone, I was starting a new stage in my career. This implied a series of tasks to be carried out in the province of Tarapacá, and a total revision of the war planning according the plans received from the General Staff before my departure.

After the farewell party to General von Hagen and his wife, I settled down fully to my military functions. Likewise I let my wife know the date when I would go to Santiago to bring her to Iquique.

We wanted to travel by sea from Valparaíso northwards. We chose the Italian liner "Verdi" although it did not call at Iquique, sailing from Antofagasta to Arica directly. Our voyage lasted three days, and provided a good rest. We landed in Arica where a vehicle was waiting for us, and went by road to the house in which I was settled.

CHAPTER II
First year in Command of the Sixth Army Division

As I have said before, I stayed some days in Iquique before receiving the unit, without presenting or showing myself. Thus I was able to learn from the outside what was happening and about the numerous problems in the units of the Division.

After visiting Fort Baquedano in the nitrate pampa, I inspected the building where the General Heardquarters of the division were located. I was surprised to learn that the second floor of the building was used as the residence of the Head of the General Staff which affected the proper functioning of the departments. Luckily the problem was solved when during those days the Chief of Staff handed over the post and his rooms.

Later, I visited all the units, making a detailed check of all the dependencies and documentation. At the end of the visits I wrote a report with all the observations I had made. The units conforming the Division were:

— Infantry Regiment N° 5 "Carampangue", commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Jorge Lazo. The building predated the War of the Pacific of 1879. It was maintained thanks to painting and repairs.
— Telecommunications Regiment N° 6 "Tarapacá", commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Fernando Fernández Pérez. It was the newest of the division together with the Logistics Batallion. Its more recent building were already deteriorating from air pollution.

— Logistic Batallion N° 6 "Pisagua" commanded by Major Rafael Vargas Leiva. This unit had a pharmacy which received all the discarded medicines. I had it closed and came to an agreement with a local pharmacy for the sale of medicines.
— Armoured Regiment N° 1 "Granaderos", commanded by Colonel Hernán Hiriart Laval, who handed it a month later to Lieutenant Colonel Adrián Ortiz. The most majestic of the buildings facing Cavancha beach was maintained thanks to painting and patching, as was the one of the "Carampangue". I ordered that the unit keep the Baquedano Fort and send all its armoured vehicles to this place.
— Artillery Regiment N° 6 "Dolores", commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Luis Daniel Concha Martínez, who later handed over the command to Lieutenant Colonel José Domingo Ramos. This unit maintained the rest of old buildings which had not been expropiated to erect new ones. The artillery men would remain in their place while we built new barracks for them.

A week after taking command of the division I travelled by land to Arica to visit the Infantry Regiment N° 4 "Rancagua", commanded by Colonel Manuel Castillo who later handed the post to Colonel Agustín Toro Dávila, while he remained as Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Division. On that opportunity I decided that one of the empty houses for officers should be left for the exclusive use of the Commander-in-Chief, for reasons of security and to save hotel expenses.

During those days I went to greet my old friend the Governor of Arica, General Adrián Barrientos Villalobos, of whom I had been adjutant in the Military Academy in 1945. He had been appointed to that post by President Frei.

That same week I visited the village of Putre, to the interior of Arica to study the possibility of taking a unit of the "Rancagua" Regiment there.

Once I finished inspecting the units, I proceeded to greet the principal authorities of the province. I started by visiting the Intendant of Tarapacá Luis Jaspard da Fonseca, then the Mayor, Jorge Soria, a Marxist disguised as socialist, and then the President of the Court of Appeals, my good and esteemed friend Minister Jaime Chamorro. They returned the call later at the General Headquarters of the Division. I had thus fulfilled the social and protocolary aspects of my post. During those days I also received the visit of my old iquiqueño friends.

We then began to work intensely to prepare the instructive and administrative documents for the activities which the unit had to carry out during 1969. I personally took care of its drafting because my Chief of Staff, Colonel Manuel Castillo, who had been transferred from Arica to Iquique had not yet presented himself.

A group of officers was given the mission to prepare the "History of the Division", and organize at the end of the year a competition on this subject. This first and second places would receive cash prizes and the third one an object d'art.

The first days of February I received a communique from the High Command which informed me I had been appointed Head of Forces of the Province of Tarapacá, excepting the Department of Arica, for the Congressional elections which would take place on March 2nd. For that purpose I took care to organize the forces which would take part in the electoral act, and gave the corresponding instructions to maintain order and public tranquility. As usual in Chile, the elections proceeded out normally and without any problem. When the ballots were counted, we found a high percentage of votes of that zone from the left and extreme left forces.

Another of the measures I took when I assumed the command of the division was to make a thorough repair of the houses occupied by the officers and their families in Iquique. They were very run down and had not been restored for years. The same arrangements were made to those occupied by the regular personnel. I also had a square arranged in the military housing estate, so that the young children could have a place in which to play and officers' families a place to meet.

The Intendancy of Tarapacá

On April 2nd I received a communication from the Minister of Defense ordering the Commander-in-Chief of the Division to assume the Intendancy of Tarapacá. I took up the post the following day. This activity lasted longer than expected, for I was to remain in that position while the regular intendant, Luis Jaspard da Fonseca, went abroad making use of his holidays which he had accumulated for two years.

The first difficulty I had was the reaction of the lawyer of the Intendancy. He sent me a written communication in which he asked me to resign from the post because, according to law, I had no right to it. His proceeding seemed very strange to me as the order to take up the post had come from the Ministry of the Interior, which was suppossed to know the law. I therefore decided to write a report and send it to the Ministry. I did not receive an answer immediately but the lawyer never bothered or wrote to me again. A few days later he was appointed lawyer of the Government of Arica.

I carried out my obligations as Intendant in the mornings. I was doing this when on May 9th 1969 received a telex informing me that I had been promoted to Brigadier General and transcribed page 253 of the official bulletin N° 19. Together with my promotions, I was given the decoration "President of the Republic".

A few days after I had taken up the Intendancy I began preparing the festivities to celebrate the anniversary of the Naval Combat of Iquique of May 21st 1879. As in previous years, some of the ships of the fleet would be coming. I had several meetings with local authorities and we prepared a varied program which included parades, a visit to the buoy marking the place where the "Esmeralda" had sunk and where wreaths would be thrown in the waters, and other ceremonies the people of Iquique would carry out on to mark the event. Everything proceeded exactly as planned.

The last day of festivities I offered a lunch in Pica to the officers of the fleet. On the way they stopped in Fort Baquedano where a tank show had been prepared for them. They were later allowed to drive these machines and received a certificate as "honorary tank officers". Unfortunately the navy officers who drove the thanks refused to wear overalls, so that they were left all white covered with the desert sand which is raised as a cloud behind the tanks.

Vice-Admiral Tirado Barrios came in charge of the fleet in that opportunity. We talked amicably and he later repaid the hospitality with a cocktail on board the cruiser "O'Higgins" for the authorities of Iquique.

During the time I was in the Intendancy I went to Antofagasta four or five times to attend the Corfo Norte meetings, in the place of the regular intendant. From the first trip to that city I received the attentions of the Commander of the First Division who would wait for me in the airport. He was my classmate in the Military Academy, Roberto Viaux, who informed me I would be his guest. He was also replacing the Intendant. I told him I did not want to bother, and that I had booked a room in the Hotel Turismo. As he insisted I accepted his invitation after cancelling my reservation in the hotel. That day I had dinner in his house and then we stayed up talking in the drawing-room. We fell on military subjects and he suggested that we carry out joint maneuvers. I told him I saw no objection, and that as Regiment commander I had taken part in the maneuvers of Quillagua. He insisted that we should make them in Copiapó, to which I firmly objected because the Division would be too far away from its jurisdictional zone and I would lose my command over it.

Although we talked until past midnight, we did not reach any agreement. In the two or three opportunities I travelled to Antofagasta, the subject of conversation in the house of General Viaux was whether we would hold the maneuvers in Copiapó or Quillagua, but we never came to a definite agreement.

At the beginning of June I was informed of the return of the Intendant. I prepared to hand over the post, but during those days the Director of the Civil Police died in an accident and Mr. Jaspard da Fonseca had to stay in Santiago to replace him as substitute in the Direction of this institution. As a result, I was to continue to replace the intendant until the problem

was solved either by the appointment of a new intendant or the naming a regular Director of the Civil Police.

Those days I prepared several study trips to the interior of the province and along the coast with all the commanders of tactic and combat units. Life in Iquique went on smoothly until the morning of August 22nd when an incident came to upset the peace. The chief of the Civil Police was waiting for me that morning in my office to inform me that the Industrial College had been occupied by its students, who had declared that they would remain there "until the last consequences" if their problems were not solved. This action had been planned by a group of youths of the Communist Party who had taken as their cause the lack of teaching materials in that school.

Although I considered that they had a valid motive for complaint, because this problem had remained unsolved for quite some time due to the negligence of the educational authorities, I believed that to take over the school was contrary to discipline. I immediately called to the Intendancy a group of people related to the students. About eight ladies turned up at my office, and I told them that I would not accept such irregularity which was contrary to every principle of order. They departed and went to talk with the students who were inside the building so as to try and make them give up their protest, but without results. In view of this I ordered that the building be isolated and that the supply of water, electricity and telephone be cut off.

August 22nd went on normally, but the effects began to be felt that night, and the following day was even less comfortable. The mothers of the students, many of them communists, asked permission to place the matter before the local judge who would take necessary measures. They also appealed to politicians of their party who did not take long to appear I think it is possible that it was they who had planned all this from the start.

Two prominent members of the Communist Party, Senator Luis Valente Rossi and Deputy Arturo Carvajal came to the Intendancy requesting an audience. The former made various arrogant threats demanding that the order be rescinded; the other did not open his mouth. It would appear that he had come to provide moral support to the senator. About three in the afternoon I was called by the Undersecretary of Interior who told me he was talking on behalf of the President.

As a good politician he approved the measures adopted, but inmediately explained to me the difficult position that the Goverment was facing as a result of this. In those moments a law of great interest for the country was passing through Congress and they needed the support of the Communist Party to obtain its prompt approval. All this could misfire if the situation in the Industrial College continued. The ensuing crisis in Congress would not only damage the alliance but would impair the dispatch of

numerous other laws in progress. Finally he told me the President asked me to consider the matter as settled. The problem would be solved by the Ministry of Education which would concede the students all they had asked for so insistently.

I replied that if the Government was willing to give way, who was I to insist, and that if they solved their problems in this manner, they should also assume the responsibility for their behaviour. I then went home.

A few days later I was called from the Army General Staff to inform me that in the Senate Session N° 36 of August 26th 1969, Senator Valente Rossi had gived an absolutely distorted account of the incidents in the Industrial College. According to him, the problem had not been caused by the students who had taken over the school, but by the authorities.

An interesting thing in this accusation is the fact that senator Valente Rossi confused the two Generals Pinochet and mixed the events of the El Salvador mine with the happenings of the Industrial College, adding remarks with which we would become very familiar in the following years.

At the end of its term of office the Government had almost no authority; little by little it had been diluted or vanished, and it was incapable of facing any situation which required character or strength. The mistake of the ruling party was to believe that it would harvest a victory in the 1970 elections after the suicidal weakness with which it had acted. I always thought the outcome would be negative for them, and so it proved to be.

On September 18th a Te Deum was celebrated in the cathedral by the Bishop of the Diocese, José del Carmen Valle, and the following day the Garrison carried out the Great Military Parade along the Gran Avenida facing the Telecommunications Regiment, which was warmly celebrated by the public.

The first days of October I handed over the post to the new intendant who was coming to replace Luis Jaspard.

During the months I replaced the Intendant, I was able to acquire a thorough knowledge of the social, political and economic needs of the province. I had to deal with the unions of the fishing and maritime companies, and other minor ones. I remember that during a union meeting Deputy Carvajal appeared supported by the union. I told him the meeting had been convened to deal with labor problems not political ones. As he did not leave on his own, I asked him to depart before I ordered that he be ejected by force. He obeyed reluctantly.

I had to solve also the illegal occupation of private lands by a group of self-appointed "homeless". What made this situation more serious was the fact that government officials helped the illegal settlers to entrench themselves in the occupied lands. I also faced those groups of people who did not pay their rents. In spite of legal sentences, the rents were not paid because the government had given orders not to make evictions.

Law was thus not enforced. In short, it can be said abuses were committed all over the country, protected by a government which tolerated anything in order to keep the support of its electorate.

The lack of authority on the part of the Government not only contributed to the destruction of the institutional defenses of the country but was unable to stop Marxism. The Communist Party pervaded all the spheres of the national life. Later on, during those days of 1969-1970, the extremist groups MIR (Leftist Revolutionary Movement), VOP (Organized Vanguard of the People), JJ.CC. (Communist Youths), and others went about as feudal lords. Assaults and thefts were commoplace as the authorities looked on indifferently. Every day, new slogans covered the walls, and seizures of lands, farms and buildings, many of them incited by government officials, were taking the country on the road to destruction, leaving it in the hands of the lawless elements.

In the face of such harmful and negative behaviour on the part of the government wich was practically pushing the country towards communism and the destruction of democracy, nobody moved a finger. History will severely judge the guilty men who ruled with such blandness, and who, in their interest to get votes, paved the road of Marxism to La Moneda.

The events in the Tacna Regiment

The first days of October I had to travel to Santiago to form part of the Army Qualification Committee which is carried out annually. The last day of the meetings, as we were about to leave, an adjutant of the High Command came to inform some of the Generals that they were called to the office of the Commander-in-Chief. Among them was General Viaux, who returned after half an hour and told me he had been called to retirement.

The following day there was a public declaration in "La Segunda" carrying the headline "The Northern Army demands the government reinstate General Viaux", and signed by sixty officers of the First Division of the Army. I learnt about this last part later, because I had to return to Iquique by plane on October 17th and be there in the morning of that day. In the afternoon of that day I was signing the dispatch in my office when I received a coded message from the High Command informing me that everything was normal and that General Viaux would hand over his command to Brigadier General Galvarino Mandujano. Three days later I learnt General Viaux had returned to Santiago on October 20th.

On October 21st, General Viaux barrricaded imself in the Artillery Regiment "Tacna". It was also known that the "School of Non-Commissioned Officers", Armoured Regiment N° 2 and officer students of the War Academy had joined the barricading. We also learnt later that, after

numerous incidents some real and others invented, General Viaux had agreed to surrender and that, among the compensations he asked for, was the removal of the Minister of Defense, Brigadier General Tulio Marambio who was replaced by Sergio Ossa Pretot. General Sergio Castillo was also removed from his command of the Army, and was replaced by General René Schneider, who was in command of the Fifth Division of the Army in Punta Arenas. General Viaux was later arrested and held incommunicado in the Military Hospital.

In October I ordered the Chief of Staff of the Divisional General Headquarters to prepare the great division exercises of that year, according to the plans of the General Staff of the Army. These exercises were carried out in the area of the Tarapacá ravine, where the troops received an excellent combat experience.

On my return from Santiago I talked with Colonel Castillo who had been called to retirement. I told him that my defense of him had been countered by the opinion of the other Generals who said that Colonel Castillo himself had, rather unwisely, talked about retiring, and that this consideration had prevailed in the Committee with the results already known. Castillo thanked me and asked me to allow him to direct the maneuvers to be carried out those days and to make the critique afterwards. The exercise was not only well fundamented but his critique was a sort of farewell from a soldier who had given most of his life to the Army. It was a moving moment which I will always remember.

We organized the Soldier's Christmas in December in each of the units, a festivity which was always received with great joy by the military family.

We celebrated the end of the year 1969 with farewell parties in the officers', non-commissioned officers' and privates' mess. This marked the end of my first year in the Command of the Sixth Division and the start of my second year, as the Commander-in-Chief had confirmed me in my post.

CHAPTER III
Second year in Command of the Sixth Division of the Army

The first days of January I received authorization from the Commander-in-Chief to travel to the south of Perú between January 20th and February 8th, while making use of my legal holidays.

Through Peruvian lands

I took some days to prepare the itinerary of this trip I was to make with my family. We would start by plane ant then continue by train. However when I went to the consulate to get a visa, the Peruvian Consul not only stamped my passport accordingly, but came three days later to my office to inform me that General Mercado Jarrín on behalf of the Peruvian Army invited me to visit the southern part of that country. As regards the necessary means of transport, these would be provided by the Army. I thanked the Consul, and from that moment I started to prepare my trip by land to the zone of Tacna, Moquegua, Arequipa, Puno, Cusco and Machu Picchu, with the possibility to return by plane.

I left for Tacna with my family on January 19th. We arrived that afternoon at the Turismo Hotel where we spent the night. The Commander of the Tacna Garrison was waiting for us there with a group of officers and their wives, many of whom we had met before. As we were travelling with my wife and children, Marco Antonio and Jacqueline, the Peruvian military families had brought their children of the same age to establish bonds among the young people.

The following morning before 8.00 Major Ruiz turned up at the hotel. He had been named my adjutant for the trip to Arequipa, and had been instructed to solve any problem I could have during our journey to that town.

We departed about midday and arrived to have lunch in the house of an old friend, Antonio Biondi. He received us warmly. Also present in his house were the Commander of the Moquegua Batallion with his wife and another couple who were teachers in that town.

After an excellent lunch we went to visit the Moquegua church, an architectural gem of great historical value. After saying good bye to our friends, we left from there for Arequipa by car. A long road in very good conditions joined Tacna to Arequipa, except for some short stretches which were being repaired or rebuilt. Thus we arrived after eight or more hours journey to the Arequipa Hotel. Brigadier General Carlos Villa Pasos was waiting for us there together with a group of officers of his General Headquarters and their wives. We greeted everyone and as we were very tired after such a long journey we retired to rest in a suite they had booked for us in the Arequipa Hotel.

The following day General Villa and three officers of his general headquarters, apart from the escort officer, were waiting to have breakfast with me. Arequipa is a very beautiful town; I had stopped there on two occasions when travelling from Quito to Santiago as the Panagra plane used to land there before flying to La Paz, en route to Santiago. The most impressive stage of that journey was the flight over Lake Titicaca because the plane reaches a great height and the landscape before your eyes is wonderful. Both times my stay in the airport was longer than expected due to technical reasons, and the passengers had been authorized to visit the town, though only for a short time.

After 12 years the town was as lovely as ever in spite of the earthquake it had suffered. The damages had been for the most part already repaired. The outer walls of the buildings are mostly of white stone, giving it a pleasant beauty as if it were a fairy city covered with icing sugar.

That morning I was invited by General Villa Pasos to visit the Regional and Divisional General Headquarters, both of which were housed in a lovely manor. He introduced me to some officers of the Garrison and to others working there. That day we also went to visit the museums and the town cathedral. It allowed us to appreciate beautiful works of art of the Inca culture, the new arcade buildings and shops in general. During these visits my wife and children were accompanied by the wife of Major Ruiz who took care to show them the city and the tourist sights in detail. At lunch time we were invited by the General to a restaurant near the city. There we met most of the officers of the Arequipa Garrison with their wives.

In the afternoon I was accosted by a group of journalists who had been waiting since the morning to talk with me. They asked with insistence

about the reason of my trip. I replied it was my wish to visit Machu Picchu. Questions then dealt with Chilean arms purchases. I answered that Chile had not increased its war material; what had happened was that we had acquired new equipment but only to replace what had been damaged or discarded due to age. That information was spread to the whole country. The following day the regional press published in large headlines two or three articles referring to my declarations and my visit to Cusco.

That evening my wife and I were invited to a dinner in the main club of the town offered to us by the civil authority, whom I had met when he was Prefect of Tacna. During his stay in the south he had been always considered a courteous and tactful man. He gave us that night during the dinner a souvenir of our stay in the city.

In Cusco

Very early next morning we boarded the train that made the journey from Puno to Cusco. We were very interested to know the geography of the zone, but we had to suffer the crossing of an area called "the line" which is about 5.200 meters above sea level. Tourists normally suffer from vertigo or dizziness there. However, none of us was sick from the altitude. Before leaving Arequipa station Lieutenant Colonel Boggino presented himself, and told me he would be my guide and adjutant during the trip to Cusco. He made the journey very pleasant with his anecdotes and card games which delighted my children.

We arrived in Puno in the afternoon. When we were reaching the final stretch of the track I saw something picturesque: for about five blocks along the track there were tents where the indians sitting on stools were having their long hair cut. It called my attention to see the hair being put in a sack and kept. I asked Lieutenant Colonel Boggino the reason, and he explained that it was a business, the hair being sold by weight at a fairly high price and used to make wigs, hairpieces and to extract the lanolin.

General La Vera was waiting for us in the station of Puno with a group of officers. I had met him when he was the Peruvian Military Attaché in Chile. After greeting the General and his wife, they took us to a very comfortable hotel where we settled.

General La Vera came to fetch us after dinner and invited us to visit Puno. We visited the port installations and the new housing states. It was a lake port which seemed to be progressing very fast. What I had seen in 1960 was but a shadow of the present town.

Very early next morning we boarded the Puno-Cusco train. The journey, which in itself is very monotonous, starts by bordering the lake until Juliaca, and afterwards takes a northeasterly direction. The novelty makes it less

tiring, as the route allowed us to see a lovely valley. We arrived about eight o'clock in Cusco, after having travelled for eleven hours on the train.

From the station, which was very crowded we moved to the hotel. The presence of Lieutenant Colonel Boggino was very convenient, for he got a car to go there and solved the problem at the hotel. We had made our reservation thirty days before by telegram, and although it had been confirmed —and a cable proved it— we found we had no rooms. Our explanations to the manager were useless, but thanks to the authority of Commander Boggino we were given two rooms with private baths. Those days there was a great affluence of tourists, and therefore we would have faced a serious problem as there were no available hotel rooms in Cusco. We also had the disagreeable presence of a group of ill-mannered American "actors", in the hotel dining-room. Their manner and clothes were those of the Far West cowboys and they behaved as such. Either they were very imbued with their roles or they wanted to call the attention of the public.

Cusco was the great pre-hispanic city of Qosgo and later the capital of the Tawantinsuyo Andean State, an administrative, religious and military urban centre. Later, in colonial times it became a city which gathered different Indian and Spanish American peoples, and was the true economic and cultural capital of the Viceroyalty of Perú.

For a long time my wife and I had wished to visit the archaelogical capital of South America, the place from where Almagro had come to Chile. It was in Cusco where the great political and social movements of colonial America originated. All we saw and learnt there was of great interest for us and for our children, who after twenty years still remember the exceptional experience of having visited such an important place.

We stayed in Cusco for two days, during which time we visited the city and admired the numerous works of art, especially the temples. In one of them we had opportunity to see the famous monstrance of solid gold with a giant pearl shaped as a mermaid and many other wonderful works crafted in solid gold with precious stones.

I talked with the officers about the earthquakes which have affected the region. Strangely enough, these movements produced some interesting results here: they have helped to establish the different stages of the architecture of Cusco, when walls of Incan buildings which had been covered over, were laid bare.

One of the aspects which call your attention there is the solidity of the Incaic construction and the inmense temples. In one of them were the rooms in which Atahualpa marked with his hand the height up to which he would fill these rooms, one with pieces of gold and two with silver crafts. It also called to our attention the buildings made of huge stones solidly

joined which give the impression they are a whole block because not even the point of a thin knife can penetrate its joints.

After visiting numerous important places we went to the Episcopal see, a lovely building where we contemplated works whose description would give material for an important research. We also visited the market with its typical sellers and the new residential zone.

I think that day was the most tiring of the trip, but we all so wanted to see every corner in order to enjoy so many riches and architectonic wonders, that we did not feel tired or hungry.

Three days after our arrival we boarded the train which makes the trip to Machu Picchu. The journey is very interesting for the passengers, most of them tourists. The train goes through lovely places. My children learnt a lot during the trip. In the area of Ollaytambo we saw from the train the Fortress of Ollantay on the top of a hill. Here Lieutenant Colonel Boggino told us an interesting story about General Ollantay and his love affair with the daughter of the Inca.

Before arriving to Machu Picchu the train stops in the lower part. From there you reach the archaelogical sites in small buses that quickly climb the hill. Curiously, as the buses go zigzagging up, you find little boys who run up the hill in a straight line offering goods or begging for money at every turn.

When we reached the high part we were still rather disoriented so we went to the tourist meeting place. We were there when a gentleman presented himself to Boggino and said he was the official Army guide who had been commissioned by the General Staff to accompany us. This was very useful because his explanations were worth several textbooks and his knowledge allowed him to answer any questions.

We went back later to the hotel to have lunch and in the afternoon the same guide took us to visit other places in a very complete tour. This person, as I said, before was very cultivated and answered all our questions. His descriptions of every place left the impression he knew his metier thoroughly.

In the evening, very tired, we took the same buses to go to the railway station. Lieutenant Colonel Boggino had sent somebody to book the seats which allowed us to travel to Cusco without problems, because the visitors are innumerable. When we were having dinner in the hotel the Colonel in charge of the Cusco Garrison who was also the President of a local development corporation, came to see us. I had met this officer several years before in Tacna. It was nice to meet him again and during our talk we remembered his stay in Tacna and mine in Arica. He met my wife and children and regretted his wife was in Lima at that moment. After dinner he invited us to visit the following day some interesting places in the surroundings of Cusco and to have lunch in a place away from the city. On

that occasion we went by helicopter through a lovely valley and had lunch in an inn. That same afternoon and next day we saw other interesting places such as Coricancha or temple of the sun, Acllahuasi or temple of the sun virgins. The Fortress of Sacsayhuaman (Satiated Falcon) gave us an idea of the military preparation of these warriors. We then returned to Cusco by car.

The afternoon of that day we flew over the zone so as to know from the air other interesting places and thus admire the beautiful landscapes. The Lieutenant who had been assigned as our adjutant, invited us to attend that evening a performance of an incaic ballet. This show, a novelty for us, allowed us to see the typical dances of that region.

The following day we continued visiting places which are outstanding testimonies of the incan culture. Thus we saw the palace of Inca Roca in the outskirts of Cusco, where you can find the extraordinary Twelve Angles Stone. We also went to the stone quarry from which they took the huge stones. The secret of how they were adjusted is a mystery which still today has not been solved. I listened to many theories, some of them very interesting but none proven.

The day before our return I went to the Bank of Perú to change some dollars where I noticed I was being followed by a group of people. I learnt later it was military security which was looking after me, and according to Lieutenant Colonel Boggino, was trying to prevent any problem I could have.

On Sunday we visited a village near Cusco, there was an open air market in that place attended by the Mayor who carried a stately baton, the symbol of his authority. In the square they were selling every imaginable thing. I was impressed by the activity carried out by the indian mayors. We were walking through a street paralell to the square when we noticed a small indian man whose deep blue eyes drew our attention. We asked Boggino about this case and he explained me these indians were descended from a group of Spaniards who had penetrated in the jungle reaching a tribe with which they had mixed, and their descendants presented those special traits. The indian we had noticed was one of them.

We returned by vehicle and we had the opportunity to admire the beautiful sights of the region. We travelled through a mountain road extremely narrow and dangerous.

After going to the hotel to change clothes we went out with our children to another market. I was very surprised when I listened my son Marco Antonio talking in Quechua to a woman in the fair. When she answered him he did not know what to say and was very distressed. I asked him where he had learnt those sentences, he showed me a Spanish-Quechua dictionary he had bought in a stall of the hotel. He had learnt those sentences to bargain as he had seen the Cusco people do it, but he did

not understand a word when they answered him back. Lieutenant Colonel Boggino celebrated his initiative very much, and as he knew the language taught him a few sentences which my son quickly learnt and just as quickly forgot.

The following day we travelled from Cusco to Puno by train. Almost the whole trip was made under heavy rain. We arrived in Juliaca about 18.00 and then to Puno. General Luis La Vera was again waiting for us and kindly invited us to have dinner in his house that evening. After we had settled in the same hotel we went to the house of the General who was with some officers of his division and their wives. Dinner was very pleasant and on that occasion we were given nice presents both to me and to my wife. I thanked the Peruvian fellow-officer for his hospitality, and for the attentions of his wife towards mine.

Next day, very early in the morning, I went to the market with Lieutenant Colonel Boggino because I had told him I wanted to buy a length of vicuna cloth. We arrived to where a lady had a stall. Boggino had warned me not to speak a word because they would realize I was a foreigner and the price would be very high. I did so and after listening to a lively chatter Boggino turned back and handed me two lengths of fabric for 150 soles. It was a real bargain. We bought them and returned to the hotel before going to the airport.

Thirty minutes later we had said good bye to everybody and the plane gained altitude to go to Arequipa where we arrived just in time to take the plane going to Tacna.

In Tacna we were expected by some Peruvian officers and by the Commander of the Garrison who invited us to have lunch in his house. We talked there quite a lot about our interesting trip and the architectural wonders we had seen.

We returned to Arica in the afternoon by car. We had made an interesting journey which had lasted 17 days, during which we had admired the incan culture and its buildings so rich in architectonic and historical elements that still keep many secrets.

September 4th 1970

The following day I was holding a meeting of officers in my office of the General Headquarters. Work started as in the previous year and nothing exceptional occurred. May 21st was celebrated with the presence of some warships. On that opportunity we invited the naval officers to have lunch in the different units of the Iquique Garrison. I invited the senior officers to my house, but as my wife was in Santiago for reasons of health my daughter Jacqueline took the place of her mother. She was only 9 years old and her gifts as hostess were much celebrated by the guests.

In July the General Staff of the Army informed me I had been appointed Chief of the Military Forces of the Tarapacá province (with the exception of Arica) for the presidential election of September 4th 1970. We took all the necessary measures. We distributed the troops, and on the day of the election I assumed the command as Chief of the Military Forces in Iquique. I followed the development of the election from my General Headquarters which, as usual, proceeded normally. We received the results of the voting that night. Together with the officers of General Headquarters, we listened, very distressed, to the information which announced the victory of the Marxist candidate Salvador Allende, who had only obtained a relative majority of the ballots. He had only 39.000 votes more than the candidate in the second place, Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez.

I called the regular officers and the General Headquarters personnel to a meeting in my office. There I told them more or less the following: "The people of Chile do not know the road they have taken. They have been deceived, because they seem to ignore where Marxism-Leninism will lead us. Gentlemen, I think it will be the end of the independent life of our beloved Chile, which in the long run will become a satellite of Soviet Russia. There is still a remote possibility that Congress should reject Mr. Allende or that he changes his course, which seems very difficult because from now on he will be controlled very closely by the Communists to prevent him from changing his policy". In think that was one of the most distressing nights of my life.

Afterwards I was left with the officers only, to whom I stated: "I am at the end of my career. The salvation of Chile will be in your hands. May God help the fate of our country". I think that today my officers still remember that night in the General Headquarters of the Army's Sixth Division.

The candidate of the Popular Unity, Salvador Allende, had the first option to be President of Chile, after his various previous efforts and attempts had ended in failure. Now his old ambition had come true and it was logical he would appeal to every means to ensure what was almost his. From that moment an intense campaign of falsehoods and deceit started in the country. From the beginning Allende, without any scruples or qualms, deceived the Christian Democrats who put themselves in his hands. With a great power of conviction or through negotiations, he obtained the support of that major party, to ratify his relative triumph in Congress sixty days later, and be confirmed as President of the Republic.

Before giving him its support the Christian Democratic Party demanded from him numerous promises, all of which Allende accepted even though he did not mean to honour them. He would say later that they "were tactical measures".

However to clothe it with a veil of solemnity, he signed with great publicity a "Statute of Constitutional Guarantees", a document drawn up

by the Christian Democratic Party which, in a short time, became a dead letter, not being applied nor enforced. This proceeding constitutes, no doubt, one of the numerous examples of the lack of seriousness with which Marxist assume engagements which circumstances oblige them to make.

I reproduce here some of the questions which the Communist jornalist Regis Debray put to Salvador Allende in an interview published in "Punto Final" on March 16th 1971.

"Debray: Was it absolutely necessary, was it imperative to negotiate this statute of democratic guarantees?

"Allende: Yes, that is why we did it. I am still convinced it was right to produce that Statute of Guarantees, but it is convenient to clarify that it is unfair to use the word negotiation because we did not yield a line of our government program. Put yourself in the period when this statute was produced and you will realise that it was a tactical measure. We have talked enough about the dramatic period between September 4th and October 24th. Think of a country chastised by a "campaign of terror" as the process of psychological intimidation of the people by its enemies was called. That campaign ran side by side with the astonishment of the world which observed this small country saying "This is the first time a marxist reaches power through an election". "A wing of the Christian Democratic Party headed by one of its leaders, Radomiro Tomic, came to the conclusion that Chile would have a civil war if they did not provide a majority in Congress to support our triumph. This wing then proposed to recognise our victory in exchange for a Statute of Guarantees. On the one hand they said that we, tainted by the ideology of the revolutionary class, provoked terror, but at the same time added that they did not want to be responsible for a civil war. This is how the Statute was born. Read it and compare it with our program of government and you will conclude we did not change an iota of it. At that moment the most important thing was to take power".

Through this declaration of Allende we can confirm how he fooled the Christian Democratic Party.

Facing the election of Allende

Many Chileans of all categories and social groups tried to influence Congress so that it should not confirm the election of Allende, while he soothingly carried out a daring campaign to attract those groups which rejected him. For instance he tried to win the support of former military men of a certain prestige within the Armed Forces, calling then to meetings in his house of Guardia Vieja Street. They were invited on the pretext of talking about a subject of interest for the retired officers. They never reached any conclusion; the proposals made by the officers were many but the answers were only empty words. However, there were many pictures of the meetings

themselves and of when they were leaving the house, which were published profusely in the pro Allende press on the following day. Thus it was implied that those retired members of the Armed Forces had gone to greet the future President and to offer him their support.

They very fact that these old soldiers appeared acting that way caused serious reservations among the officers on active service who were not used to that sort of false propaganda. Senior officers felt affected and complained about the falseness of these informations, but to no avail; they were never refuted, and on the contrary the newspapers kept on insisting on the great support they had given Allende.

I carried out my job as usual visiting the Arica and Iquique Garrisons. The first days of October after I had returned from a trip of military studies to the interior of the province, I received in my house the visit of a General who had specially travelled to Iquique from Santiago. He gave me the impression that he had been sent by an interested party, though I could not confirm it. In a private conversation he talked wonders about the Communists, and told me he had become friends with Volodia Teitelboim during a dinner in the house of a fellow officer. He showed the advantages and benefits for Chile of the application of a regime such as that offered by Allende, and how great would be the economic development of our country under that system.

I remember having told him clearly my serious reservations, pointing out where a Marxist regime could lead us. I told him the country would be driven to ruin if we followed that ideology, and that it was not necessary to look too far, because wherever Marxism had been implanted a totalitarian regime based upon hatred had ensued. I also talked to him about my experiences in 1947 and 1948 and that I had thoroughly studied their doctrine reaching the conclusion that the members of the Communist Party would never change their ways. I was sure they would not hesitate to incur in any kind of inmorality, abuse and crime to impose their ideology on the whole country and finally, if the people did not adapt to what they wanted we would suffer the tragedy of a blood bath.

I must confess that, after observing the reaction of my fellow officer, I realized that words were useless in those moments. The General did not want to hear my arguments, whether out of sympathy, ambition or credulity. My concern increased when he proudly talked again of his personal friendship with Communist Senator Volodia Teitelboim, a strange character who acted with the hipocresy typical of Communism during the government of Gabriel González Videla.

He was the person who wrote the most fantastic nonsense about the centers of banishment. An expert in brainwashing naive people, he spread his ideology in the dress of a good and affable man, who looked more like a village priest than a Communist agitator. This Soviet agent disguised

his treason to Chile with enormous ease, and he found every opportunity to praise the wonders of the "Communist paradise".

The road to freedom was slowly closing for the Chilean people, while another path was opening which would lead it to the most cruel of dictatorships, that of the proletariat. The general opinion seemed to be that nothing could be done to stop Allende before he reached the presidency. The road was absolutely blocked by the permissive and obliging attitude of the Christian Democratic Party.

Any Chilean who dared to express publicly any opinion against Allende was immediately a victim of the most poisonous attacks through the media in favour of the Popular Unity. Ridicule was their main weapon and the person affected became a target of scorn and sneer. All the citizens who opposed Allende were thus scared.

Years have passed, and when I analyse today the election of Allende in a calm and quiet state of mind, the hand of Divine Providence becomes once again evident in the fate of the nations. I make this statement considering that if Allende had not been elected President of the Republic in 1970, the country would not have experienced the sufferings of Marxism, a hard test which made it mature and awaken during the course of those three years, but which unluckily was soon forgotten. A different outcome would have allowed Marxists to continue taking advantage of the errors and decadence of democracy. Their "cure-all" image of socialism, would have continued increasing as also the number of their adherents who would have supported a new leftist candidate. He would probably have presented himself to the electorate with a new set of Marxist stratagems and in the end it would have been more difficult for Chile to escape from his net.

I travelled to Santiago at the end of September to talk with the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General René Schneider. We both agreed that the political situation was serious, and that the fact that the country would have a Marxist government had unforeseeable projections. We also remembered that he had clearly stated a short time before that the Army would respect the Constitution, and, consequently, would obey the decision of Congress.

During the first days of October I talked with some Christian Democrat friends, stressing that the decision was in their hands as they had a majority in Congress. They all coincided on the danger which was threatening Chile and were all convinced of that, but when they were told that if Congress appointed the other candidate as President of the Republic, he would receive the support of the Army, they replied at once that they were sure that Congress was able to prevent the excesses of Allende and to do so a Statute would be signed by Allende and the Christian Democratic Party with specific constitutional guarantees. All this left me with the impression

that there was a great ignorance about this ideology and that politicians had no idea what Marxism-Leninism meant or where we would be led to by the new government.

I travelled to the Arica Garrison the first days of October. A friend who was manager of a local bank invited me to his office to talk for a while, when I arrived there I met a Christian Democratic senator with whom we started a pleasant conversation. From the first moment I noticed that he was interested in finding out if the Army would react against the government if the first majority candidate was elected or if it would remain as an onlooker. To his questions I replied: "Senator, if you reject Allende and vote for the second relative majority, you can be absolutely sure the Army will support that decision in accordance with their position so critical to a Marxist President". I only received ambiguous and evasive answers.

The day of the session of Congress was drawing closer and the agreement between the Communist Party and Allende made me think Chileans had not fully realised what a Marxism-Leninist government would mean. At that moment it seemed that everyone wished to try out that leftist alliance, convinced that the country would come through, that Russia would give us support which would transform us almost into a "power", and the countless speculations being made, spread everywhere leaving a false and stale feeling of conformity.

Each day I became increasingly convinced of the ignorance people had of Marxism-Leninism and of the blindness with which we were taking the road which would lead us to the abyss.

On October 22nd we were shocked by the sad news of the criminal assault against General René Schneider. The man who had always defended the position of the Army in the face of the political situation which could result from the election of the new President, had been mortally wounded that morning by a group of people reportedly of the extreme right. He died three days later in the Military Hospital. The death of its Commander-in-Chief moved the Army deeply. General Schneider was very much loved and respected by his fellow officers and subordinates. For me it was a new cause of concern to see that the road now opening before us, was until then unknown to us. Political crime was not in our customs, and just now when Allende was going to start his government such a terrible thing had happened.

I was called to Santiago to accompany in the funeral of General Schneider. That same day we learnt that General Carlos Prats González had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army. I was glad to know that he would replace General Schneider in the command of the Army. He was a very capable man; I had known him from my young days in the Military Academy and had always kept him in great esteem. I was sure he would keep the Army as a non-political force.

On November 3rd the new President of Chile was elected in a joint session of Congress, during which he promised to carry out his duties faithfully and to respect the Constitution. Chile was the first country which voluntarily accepted the Marxist yoke. Thus we started a calvary which would last three years.

During the following days, numerous changes of officials took place in Iquique. The new Intendant was an old Iquiqueño whom I had met when I was a Captain in that town. He was a card-carrying socialist but apparently a moderate.

Those days of November and December the Intendant always showed an excellent disposition. At the end of the year I was informed that I had to travel to Santiago. At the moment I thought I was being called to retirement and in that state of mind I started 1971. I travelled to Santiago In early January 1971 and visited General Prats who informed me that I would continue in the Army, but on that occasion he did not mention my destination nor when I would hand in my post.

That same month I received a communication informing me I had been promoted to Major General. This promotion was dated December 16th 1970.

The Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Division organized a pleasant ceremony with the chiefs and officers to celebrate my promotion to Major General, then called Divisional General, which was the highest rank in the career of an officer.

Holidays in Argentina

Before departing for Santiago I had asked authorization to travel abroad. I received the permission authorized by the Head Command to leave the country and travel to Salta, Tucumán, Córdoba and Mendoza, making use of my legal holidays for 1970.

After I had handed over the Division to General Herman Brady and after many farewell parties. I travelled with my family by land to Antofagasta from where we flew to Salta.

The flight was quiet, and when we arrived at that city we were met by the Chilean consul, Mr. Irrázabal, and Mr. Roberto Issa with whom we would become excellent friends.

Roberto Issa invited us to stay in the "El Mendocino" hotel. He and his wife Rita were extremely kind to us. From that city we went to Jujuy and we reached La Quiaca. We spent unforgettable days there. The Governor of Salta offered us a cocktail when he knew I was in the city. We were entertained with several barbecues, which allowed me to meet many salteños. Among them I found Carlos Durán, an old cattle breeder who had business in Chile and whom I had met in Antofagasta. He invited us

to his house and attended us kindly together with his family. He was married to a Chilean lady, half of his children had been born in Chile and the other half in Argentina, which caused strange discussions among the children.

After a few days in Salta we left for Córdoba where we stayed for six days and then to Mendoza where we stayed a week, visiting many interesting places there. The damp climate affected us a lot, but the desire to know and visit everything overcame every problem.

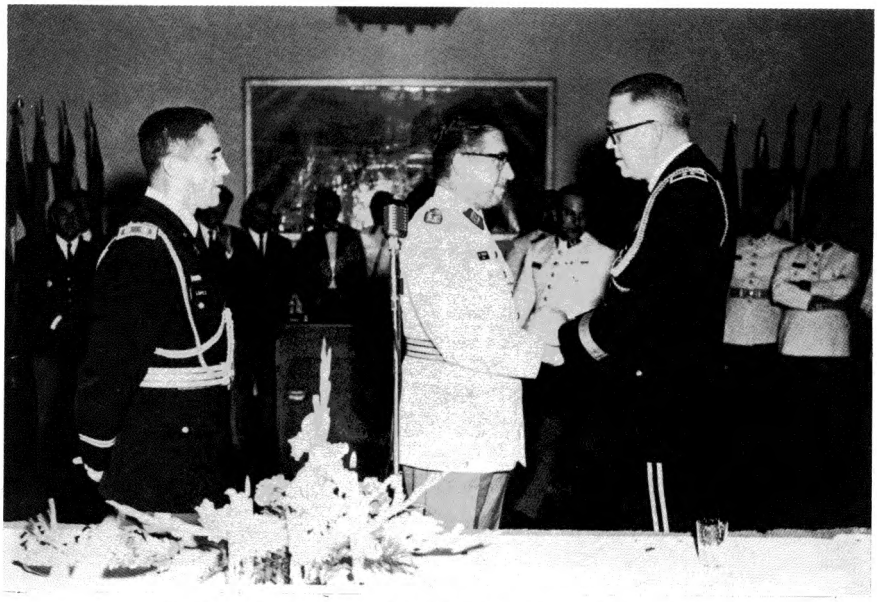
When we were in Mendoza we decided to rent a car to return to Chile by the international road. The journey was as interesting as it was dangerous. As my wife noticed that the car was running at a high speed and that the dashboard had no speedometer I asked the driver why he did not have such a necessary instrument, to which he replied "Look sir, we have taken the speedometer off all the cars making this journey, otherwise the old ladies would start screaming and not leave us in peace". Faced with such a convincing argument, all we could do was to commend ourselves to God.

We arrived in Santiago and settled in our house in Laura de Noves Street. My appointment as General in Command of the Santiago Garrison on March 10th marked a new stage in my professional life which I have called "Political-Military".

Greeting the Colonel Director of the School of Leadership Command and Staff of the U.S. Army, 1968.

Greeting an Officer of the Argentinian Navy, adviser at the Interamerican School of Defense.

Greeting General Brown together with Colonel López of the Army of Uruguay, 1968.



Visiting the Artillery School of the U.S. Army, 1968.

A visit to the United Nations Headquarters, 1968.

Visiting the Artillery School of the U.S. Army, 1968.

Attending the opening of Congress with the Commander-in-Chief ot the Army on May 21st.

Attending a social event with his mother Mrs. Avelina Ugarte.

With the personnel of the General Headquarters of the Sixth Division of the Army.

With the personnel of the General Headquarters of the Sixth Division of the Army, 1969.

The author receives the decoration "President of the Republic", 1969.

Decoration "President of the Republic", 1969.

FIFTH PART
MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER I

In the General Command of the Santiago Garrison

During they days I spent in Santiago before taking up the command of the Garrison, I gathered information about the conditions in which my friends, fellow officers and relatives were living in the capital after the change of Government. I had been away for more than two years, and I wanted to know about their concerns and problems.

From these conversations I gathered that a great majority was pleased with the new government in Chile, and looked upon the Marxist experience with interest. Any worries were only temporary.

For my part I told them about the dangers of Marxism-Leninism and the tragedy it had caused in many countries. They replied with indifference and sometimes with a sneer, commenting that my fears were exaggerated.

During that year in command of the Garrison, many important things happened, some annoying and others rather painful, such as the Presidential Address of 1971, the murder of ex-Minister Pérez Zujovic, the earthquake on July 8th, the visit of Fidel Castro, the presence of various armed groups and numerous criminal activities, among them the occupation of rural and urban properties and industries.

Going over my notes which I extracted from the newspapers of that time, they provide a summary of the first months of government of the Popular Unity. The points which drew my attention most were:

– The Supreme Court, in a full-meeting, rejected the deprival of congressional privilege to Radical-Democratic Senator Raúl Morales Adriasola

by eleven votes to two, revoking the decision of the Court of Appeals of Santiago. They had wanted to link the senator to the murder of General Schneider.

– On January 5th, 43 young extreme leftists were pardoned by a new Decree of the Government signed by all the Ministers, alfter the original decree had been rejected by the Office of the Comptroller General. These men had been found guilty of various crimes. Among them was a member of MIR, the notorious Luciano Cruz Aguayo.

– During those days there was a spate of takeovers of agricultural farms between Talca and Los Angeles. This way a state of tension was created in the region.

– An event which provoked public alarm – and alerted the Army – was the armed confrontation between members of the extremist group VOP and the police. After shots were exchanged in the Santa Julia housing estate five extremists were arrested and sent to court.

– The rejection by several senators of the information provided by General Emilio Cheyre concerning the existence of a guerrilla camp in Liquiñe (Province of Valdivia).

– Likewise, Minister Tohá rejected the possible existence of guerrilla centers on the southern frontier of the country. During a national broadcast on radio and television he said that changes would be carried out through the legal democratic road, and that the existence of armed groups would not be tolerated because matters concerning order were of the exclusive responsibility of the Armed Forces and the Police.

I received the Command of the Garrison of Santiago on March 8th 1971. It was handed over by Major General Orlando Urbina.

The Chamber of Deputies approved in general the project of constitutional reform to allow the nationalization of the North American copper mines.

On March 8th the Government declared a State of Emergency as a result of its first difficulties with public transport, and I was appointed Military Chief. The application of this measure met with no obstacles and there were no problems from the people.

As a result of the numerous problems which had arisen in the State Railways, Major General Rolando González was appointed intervener, to prevent the repetition of incidents which prevented the free access of its staff to the workshops.

In view of the Municipal Elections which would take place on April 4th 1971, I was named Head of the Military Forces for the Santiago province on March 14th. I took up my post on April 3rd and the same day declared in a press conference that "The Army will do its duty even if is has to face maximum risks; our duty is to keep order and guarantee the security of

all Chileans". The elections took place on the appointed day without any problem as was customary in Chile with polls.

I started to select the horses on which we would parade on May 21st when the President of the Republic read his Address to the Nation. As I was somewhat out of training due to my long stay among motorized troops, I started to practice riding every day from 7.00 to 8.30 a.m. in the riding school which used to exist on the southern side of the stalls in O'Higgins Park. I chose a horse called "Trapiche", and continued practising until a few days before May 21st.

For the first time in my life I became aware of a reality which made me thoughtful: the Catholic Church in Chile was also infiltrated by Marxism. On April 14th I read an analysis of the Chilean process, written by priests. There would be a Seminar on "The Collaboration of Christians towards the Construction of Socialism", which would start that day in Santiago with the participation of a group of priests who were in contact with workers from different towns across the country. Eighty priests from Santiago, Valparaíso, Antofagasta, Curicó, Talca and Concepción had been invited to this seminar. The topics included a study of the evolution of the Popular Movement in Chile; an analysis of the Program of the Government of Popular Unity; Church, Priests and Politics; Marxism and Christianity in Latin America and others in the same vein.

Another news item from that period was the explanation given by two Cubans jurists on the origin of the Popular Tribunals in their country and whose summary I transcribe:

"The Popular Tribunals were created in Cuba immediately after the triumph of the revolution, to replace the correctional system which was resisted by the people. Thus declared two high representatives of the actual judicial institutions of that Caribbean isle, Denio Camacho and Francisco Barona, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and director of the School of Legal Sciences in Havana".

Three other pieces of news impressed me deeply those days. One referred to "the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic. The Comptroller, Héctor Humeres, stated that he would abstain from authorizing decrees or resolutions issued by the authorities of Government which had already been the object of observations and were sent back for approval to this Department".

Another: "The Government will impose production quotas on all those manufacturers who, having the capacity to do so, refuse to satisfy the higher demand derived from the increase in purchasing power, announced yesterday the Minister of Economy, Pedro Vuskovic".

I then wrote down in my notebook of "Memoirs" the concern about the talk President Allende had with the officer corps of the Army on the

last day of April. Every word he said at that meeting was subliminal and he left us wondering "where are we going"?

About this meeting the President remarked the following in a press conference to foreign journalists: "When I talk with the men in the Army, Navy and Air Force, I do so in my role as Generalissimo of the Armed Forces, and respect the prerogatives which the Constitution has granted me". In this way he was also replying to a telegram sent by Christian Democratic Deputies who had asked him what subjects he had talked about with the military men. He forgot that to be Generalissimo it was necessary to be in a "state of war", as established by the Constitution, which was not the case at that time.

Likewise General Prats commented that according to the article 72 of the Political Constitution of the State, the President as Supreme Administrator of the State is empowered to hold meetings with the personnel.

The Command of the Santiago Garrison received alarming news about armed men. The area around Rapel, from Melipilla to the province of O'Higgins, was tracked looking for a group of subversives who according to the Government were ultrarightists. I was astonished, as there was no such a thing. This intense search was carried out by personnel of the Special Services of the Police Force with the object of finding ten men who had plundered the buildings of Los Quillayes farm.

We soon received news that the police had surrounded ten guerrillas who would be arrested in the next 48 hours by policemen of the Special Services Branch. They were nine men and a woman who had been carrying out subversives activities during 15 days in the farm Los Quillayes, 65 kms to the southeast of Melipilla. However, in spite of the facts, the Minister of Interior José Tohá declared that, according to the information collected, the guerrillas were probably ultra-right elements, which was absolutely false.

Also during those days, five country workers were put into jail in Melipilla. They belonged to the Revolutionary Peasant Movement and had illegally seized a farm where they kept an assortment of weapons. They were arrested and held incommunicado.

Thus we reached May 21st.

May 21st 1971

As I have remarked, it had been several years that I had not ridden on horseback, but used a vehicle to move around or to present the troops during reviews. That is why from mid April on I started to prepare the presentation of the officer corps of the Garrison and also to select the horses we would ride for the formation of May 21st.

Once we had decided on the troops which would present the respective honours to the President of the Republic between La Moneda, the Presidential Palace and the National Congress we started walking the horses along the route they would take to get them used to it. The orders to the units which would render honours to the President were sent in due time. However, for the first time we faced a serious obstacle concerning the security of the President, because the Civil Police and the GAP – the private bodyguard of Allende – insisted that they should be placed between the escort squadron and the presidential car. I immediately rejected this proposal; the escort squadron would go at the head and rear of the vehicle and if security men had to remain close to the President then they should go alongside the car. We had some very unpleasant moments because of the prepotence and insolence of the chiefs of these bodies who in their anger adopted threatening attitudes, though matters did not get out of hand. They were told this "was regulations, and that it would be carried out as established and that was all".

During the previous days these gentlemen obeyed reluctantly but on the 21st they behaved as programmed.

That same day I listened on the radio to the repetition of the Presidential Address, and some concepts remained in my mind and these I read again in the press on the following day. I analysed the text with other persons so as to avoid any erroneous appreciation, but we all agreed on the following: The address was not a report on the state of the Nation, but contained different concepts of Marxism-Leninism which he was presenting as the socialist policy that he would implant in Chile.

He reminded Congress about its role at present and in the past, and what would be its role in future: "Here were debated and established the laws which organized the agrarian structure of large estates, but here also these obsolete institutions were repealed laying the legal foundations of the agrarian reform we are carrying out. The institutional norms on which foreign exploitation of our natural resources is based were also established here, but this same Parliament is now reviewing them to give back to the Chileans what is theirs by right".

"Congress draws up the institutional framework, and thus regulates the social order in which it is rooted; that is why for over a century it has been more sensitive to the interests of the rich than to the sufferings of the people".

"At the beginning of this legislature I must present this problem: Chile has now in Government a new political force whose social function is not to support the traditional dominant class but the great majorities. This change in the power structure must necessarily go together with a deep transformation in the socioeconomic order which this Parliament is obliged to institutionalize.

He then warned Congress saying that everything would be questioned, and introduced the system of "totalitarian democracy" of "popular sovereignty", of which we well know its headlessness and its great power in the hands of bold ideologists.

In his address "without being explicit" he stated that he would resort to a "Socialism" in "pluralism" and "freedom", that is to say, he presented the problem in another light to the one used normally, but added that "the task is very complex because there is no precedent whatever", in other words Chile would be the guinea pig where he would experiment. He then continued saying: "It is unthinkable that the historical challenge can be so different between Russia in 1917 and Chile". In the first case the struggle to reach power was frontal while in the second one, power was attained thanks to electoral mechanisms. The procedure of both peoples was the same because the problem was how to attain the objective (the Socialist State)".

Allende clarified his ideas further when he said:

"Russia accepted the challenge and built its state, with one of those forms for the construction of socialism which is the "dictatorship of the proletariat", because it is considered that through this (violent) way nations with great masses of population can, in relatively short periods, break with backwardness and put themselves on a level with our civilization". But at what cost? And he added: "Chile finds itself today, as Russia was yesterday, faced with the necessity of building a Socialist Society but unlike Russia our road is the revolutionary road, the pluralist society already forecast by the classics of Marxism but never before applied. Chile is today the first nation on Earth called to conform this socialist society through the second model of transition" (the peaceful road). He later stressed his ideas saying: "I was sure I would have the necessary energy and capacity to carry out the effort, and model the first Socialist Society built upon a democratic, pluralist and libertarian model".

He appeased the Armed Forces and the Police Corps by appealing to their patriotic feelings when he said: "They will materialize their troubles with patriotic conscience, professional tradition and submission to the civil power; they will decide, as a constituent and representative part of the nation and as a structure of the State, to be within the periodical changes that rule their political life within a legal framework". In this way he considered that the Armed Forces would be supporting his measures.

Further on he referred again to the National Congress, the institution which handed him power, and told its members that as an organism based on the "popular vote", there is nothing in its own nature to prevent it from renewing itself to become a *de facto* "Parliament of the People" and proceed with "our effort to model the first socialist society according to a democratic, pluralist and libertarian model". And he added: "The difficulties we are

faced with are not in that field (legislative); they reside, really, in the extraordinary complexity of the tasks ahead us, which is to institutionalize the political road to Socialism, and achieve this object starting from our present reality of a society overwhelmed by backwardness and poverty".

"To achieve these aspirations requires a long road and enormous sacrifices of all Chileans". "It also requires as a fundamental requisite, to be able to establish the institutional ways of the new form of socialist order in pluralism and freedom. Our only compass wil be the loyalty to the humanism of all epochs – particularly to Marxism humanism – having always as our aim the projection of the society we desire, inspired in the deepest wishes of the Chilean people".

"Our task wil be to define and put into practice the Chilean road to Socialism as a new model of state, of economy and society centered on Man, and as such, we have to develop the theory and practice of new ways of social, political and economic organization both for the break with underdevelopment as for the socialist creation. We won the presidential elections in the name of the socialist reconstruction of the Chilean society; but our aim is no other than the 'progressive' building (ever increasing) of a power structure based on satisfying in the shortest possible time the most urgent needs of the present generation".

He threatened Congress in a broad but subtle way when he said:

"The mandate we have received engages all the material and spiritual resources of the country. We have reached a point in which regression or immobilization would be an irreparable national catastrophe". In this way, he clearly points out the danger foreseen and the hope to advance without hindrance towards popular government.

He referred to the principle of legality as follows:

"The principle of legality which rules today in Chile has been imposed after a struggle of many generations against absolutism and institutionality; that is why it is an irreversible conquest as long as there exists a difference between the rulers and the ruled. In the regime of transition to Socialism, legal norms will answer to the necessities of a people working for the construction of a new society". "But there will be its own kind of legality".

All the concepts inferred from the words of Allende were extremely disturbing, but he, as a shrewd politician he, tried to lessen their impact when he said:

"Our legal system has to be modified. That is the great responsibility of the Houses in this present hour: to contribute to the transformation of our legal system without obstruction. It depends to a great extent on the realistic attitude of Congress whether or not the legal system of capitalism can be succeeded by a socialist legal system in accordance with the socio-economic changes we are implanting. A violent break of legality may

open the door to arbitrary acts and excesses which we responsibly wish to avoid".

He now opened his ideas on the class struggle and expressed:

"The popular government inspires its policy in a premise denied by some: the existence of classes and social sectors of antagonic and mutually excluding interests".

He reinforced the concept saying: "The multiparty coalition of the popular government answers to this reality of daily confrontation between its interests and those of the dominant class, and the latter uses the confrontational mechanisms supported by the power it holds today".

"Our political revolutionary theory is consequently based on these principles of action".

"Our popular project pretends to the maximum development of the political possibilities of our country in this transitional stage towards socialism, which must selectively go beyond the present system".

Without any doubt this paragraph encloses a serious threat; faced with obstacles he stated: "The people of Chile are attaining political power without feeling obliged to use arms, because our people legitimately aim to go through the transitional stage without having to resort to authoritarian forms of government".

But he did not exclude the use of force to impose what was desired: "However, it is my duty to warn you that danger may threaten the clear road of our emancipation and could radically alter the way which our reality and collective conscience indicate: this danger is violence against the decision of the people". "If violence, internal or external, violence in any of its physical, economic, social or political forms should threaten our normal development and the conquests of the workers, the institutional continuity, the state of law, the political freedoms and the pluralism would be in serious danger. The struggle for social emancipation or for the free determination of our people would perforce adopt different forms to those which we call, with genuine pride and historical realism, the Chilean Road to Socialism".

He closed these threats in his speech by stating: "The construction of the area of social property is one of our principal objectives. The incorporation of the greater part of our basic resources, of the banking system, the large country estates, the industrial and distribution monopolies into this area is a task already started, and one which we must intensify".

He then spoke at length about economic matters: "To establish socialism in the economic area, means to replace the capitalist way of production through a qualitative change in the property relations and a redefinition of the production relations. In this context the construction of an area of social property has a human, political and economic dimension. When you incorporate great sectors of the productive force to a system of collective pro-

perty, you put an end to the exploitation of the workers. In a word you come to the "state management".

"On the political plane, the working class knows that its struggle is to socialize our principal means of production. There is no Socialism without a social property sector. The working class must remain permanently alert to incorporate new enterprises to it every day".

"It is therefore necessary to increase the social property and construct it with a new mentality (a social one). The expropriation of the most important means of production will allow the degree of cohesion of the public or state apparatus which is imperative in order to attain the great national objectives".

"This means that it is urgent to establish a planning system. Thus we will put an end to improvisation, and will gradually organize socialist planning in accordance with the program of the Popular Unity. The existence of social property requires, by definition, a capable and effective planning method, backed by sufficient institutional force".

In short, it will be realized from Allende's words that, albeit gradually, we were advancing towards the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat".

A false sense of welfare

Everything returned to normal after May 21st., and the work of the Santiago Garrison continued as usual. On May 22nd the papers carried the news that Army Major Arturo Aranda Salazar, together with a group of mountain-climbers of various nationalities, had reached the North Pole. That day I had lunch in the Military Club and together with other officers drank a toast in honour of the feat of this hardy officer who had reached one of the most desolate places on Earth. It was a source of great satisfaction and pride for the Army.

On May 25th in the morning we were shocked by the news that there had been a daring hold-up of the "Montemar" food store on Santa Rosa Street. During the hold-up, the extremists murdered policeman Gutiérrez who was on duty protecting an armoured van. Three other persons were injured. The assailants were four individuals who covered their faces with panty hose.

That same night the civilian police detained an 18-year-old man who was probably an accomplice of the assailants, because when his house was searched they found numerous kinds of bank deposit slips, plans of hydroelectric plants, and a long list of important national personalities.

During the following days I continued with my activities in the Garrison of Santiago. During my outings to the different parts of the city I was able to see how most of the population of Santiago was extremely happy with the prosperity of the country, since the money supply had (forcibly) increa-

sed, because salaries had been raised and prices remained fixed. However, merchants were not replenishing their shops.

Many people believed that, finally, a wonderful political system had been found, which allowed people to be free from their straightened circumstances. But, strangely enough, like butterflies in the sunlight, nobody reflected that within a short time we would have to awake from this deceptive dream and return to a harsh reality. With the increase in the money supply and in Government spending, while prices remained fixed, Chileans spent more as a result of this fictitious increase of purchasing power. It was really a political maneuver destined to create a sense of ease and well-being in order to win the forthcoming Municipal elections in April 1971, and thus obtain the popular support in the polls which they had failed to get in the presidential elections. However, the Government also failed to get the majority vote it wished for, this time.

Inflation begins

As the country did not have backing for those excessive issues of currency and shopowners could not replace the goods sold, we soon suffered the consequences of the excess consumption of every sort which squandered our monetary reserves. Soon there came shortages and belt-tightening. The pleasant dream of the first months came to an end, and when we woke up we found ourselves faced with the sad reality that everything was changing by 180 degrees.

As a result of the monstrous issues of currency and the fixed prices, businessmen lost money. They were, therefore, not interested in manufacturing or distributing goods, with the result that soon everybody disposed of large amounts of money but each day there were fewer things to buy. Simultaneously, an almost boundless black market developed. There you could find assorted goods which were no longer available in the shops, but at prices up to ten times higher than the official ones. This was followed by a growing increase of thefts which for the most part remained unpunished.

Together with the black market in foodstuffs, textiles, toiletries, underwear and every kind of merchandise which was openly sold and displayed outside the established shops that had run out of stock, a currency black market was also flourishing and in full activity.

The murder of Edmundo Pérez Zujovic

On June 8th I was in the office of the command with Major General Orlando Urbina talking about some problems in the service when the internal telephone rang. It was an urgent call from the Minister of Interior who informed

me, as something quite natural, of a painful and regrettable incident which had happened that morning. It was about Edmundo Pérez Zujovic who had been ambushed and murdered when he was coming out of his house by car with his daughter. I had known the former Minister of the Interior quite closely when I was in the Intendancy of Tarapacá, for he had visited the province on several occasions. I had grown fond of him because he was one of the few politicians who did not tolerate the lack of authority in which the Christian Democratic Government constantly incurred.

The murder of the former Minister posed many doubts. The number of people engaged in this savage act was not known. For this reason, and due to the possibility that this murder was the first stage of a subversive plan to be carried out across the country, a State of Emergency was decreed in the Province of Santiago which led to a curfew between 1.00 and 6.00 a.m. Control remained in the hands of the Government, except for some points which were left in charge of the Armed Forces.

The search for the assassins began immediately. That same day the Director of the Civil Police, the notorious "Coco" Paredes, met with the daughter of Mr Pérez Zujovic in his headquarters and showed her various photographs. These were examined by the lady who promptly identified the murderers of her father. With this information, Paredes had sufficient data to begin the search, and using the full strength of his department, started at once a frantic hunt across Santiago which ended five days later with the death of the criminals, as related below.

The key to the solution of this case was the recognition of the murderers by the daughter of Mr Pérez Zujovic. The deed had been committed by three individuals who, as it was learnt later, were members of the VOP, marxist extremists, a very dangerous group, who upon the advent of the Popular Unity Government had drawn closer to Allende.

It must be remembered that at the beginning of 1971, the President of the Republic had pardoned numerous young men belonging to assorted extremist groups, such as the MAPU (Movement of United Popular Action), IC (Christian Left), MIR, VOP and others, who held up banks, industries, etc. who had been set free thanks to the presidential amnesty. The president called these subversives "young idealists" who had "a different tactical appreciation, and that if they acted wrongly, they were driven by a higher desire for social change in the country". These persons had been condemned for holding up some banks. Presented in this light they seemed to be gentle lambs, but some of these "idealistic young men" had murdered many honest citizens between 1971 and 1973.

When I heard Mr Allende in a nationwide broadcast, making a comparison between the deaths of General Schneider and Mr Pérez Zujovic and asserting that "in both cases we notice the introduction of practices which are absolutely alien to our traditions", I considered that his attitude was

extremely cynical. The assasination of Pérez Zujovic was a commando operation, in which the assassins acted in cold blood, with calculated premeditation and no doubt with the object of revenge, conditions which were not present in the case of the death of General Schneider.

It was proved later that the weapon used was the same which had been stolen from Policeman Gutiérrez on May 24th. when he was killed while on duty.

I ordered that the Armed Forces, the Police Corps and the Civil Police be quartered in first degree to prevent any subversive activity which could occur. The rest of the country was put under a State of Alert. Radios were forbidden to give news about the murder so as not to alert the assasins about the progress of the investigations.

In spite of the extent of the manhunt, it was not easy to find the guilty parties. We received different and conflicting information none of which was discarded given the possibility they could be true. Only on June 13th at dawn did we managed to put end to the "Operation Enclosure" when we found the assassins in a house inside a narrow street near the Hipodromo Chile racing track. I ordered the troops of the Buin Regiment to surround the block, so that they had a very small chance of escaping. Just before 3 a.m. an officer of the Buin Regiment informed me in detail about the situation: The Rivera Calderón brothers had been found and were blocked in another exit of an interior house; the attempts of the police to enter the passage were hampered by intense machine gun and pistol fire. It was necessary to wait for the first lights of dawn to start the final action which lasted for about two hours and ended with the death of Ronald and Arturo Rivera Calderón. The former died from a burst of machine gun fire while escaping over the roofs and the latter committed suicide. Only one extremist, Heriberto Salazar Bello, nicknamed "the old man", managed to escape, like an actor in a police movie, towards the center of the city.

Due to the speed of the action, the public considered that this search was a great success of the Civilian Police. It had acted quickly to clear up the crime and to locate the criminals, but this so-called success left me somewhat worried, and for several days I was thinking about the likely existence of a connection between the murderers and the service that had managed to liquidate them quickly before they could talk too much and compromise them. Apart from this it was evident that the Direction of the Civilian Police was absolutely politicized, creating a real danger for the future given the possibility it was serving aims contrary to the public interest. All that was feasible because of the contacts which Paredes seemed to have with the extremist groups.

The third man, "the old man", remained hidden until June 16th, when he appeared in the Civilian Police headquarters. He seemed to have had the intention of murdering the director of that department in revenge for

what he doubtless considered treason. To do this he covered himself with explosives and reached the office of Paredes with an automatic weapon in his hand, but as Paredes was not at that moment in his office he held several officers in his power and killed others. The Civilian Police headquarters was surrounded by combat troops and policemen who began shooting at him when he came to the door of the headquarters a moment later. He then decided to activate and explode the charges covering his body. The result of this action was most regrettable: he had killed two officials and wounded a third one who died a few hours later.

The cold and sinister attitude assumed by the officials of the Civilian Police Department and especially that of its Director, Eduardo Paredes, and other chiefs during the inquiries leading to the clearing up of the murder of Pérez Zujovic, showed the existence of unusual proceedings hitherto unknown in that service. Its aims were directed more to politics than to assisting justice.

I was deeply concerned with the fact that the Army Intelligence Service due to its activity was obliged to work in close contact with the Civilian Police. This meant our information could be leaked. For this reason I thought the road to follow was to observe carefully their proceedings during their inquiries.

To distract public attention they spread during those days in Santiago the story of a presumed contraband of the ship "Puelche", with really farcical characteristics. The Intendant of Tarapacá, an old socialist, not knowing what red herring they wanted to create with this story, warmly defended the captain of the ship. His loyal defense brought him the scorn of the Under Secretary of Interior Daniel Vergara who treated him harshly for not collaborating with the Government. He also fell in disgrace with the Marxists who finally repudiated him and put an end to his functions in the province. His old friendship with Allende was of no avail; they had been friends from the time he had started his activities in the Socialist Party. He was kept waiting for weeks in the La Moneda anteroom asking for an audience, but he was not received and the only thing he was granted was an honourable exit from the Intendancy of Tarapacá.

On July 8th, a little after 11.00 p.m., I was still reading when a strong tremor with all the characteristics of an earthquake began. Telephones were cut and we could make contact only through radio. I went at once to the offices of the General Command where I found Major General Orlando Urbina, Commander-in-Chief of the Second Division, who had also just arrived. We immediately tried to get information about the magnitude of the earthquake and the areas affected.

At dawn we had a clearer information. It had been very strong between Arica and Temuco, producing damages with the characteristics of a catastrophe in four provinces, where it was known it had provoked the death of 32

people up to that moment and wounded many more. The provinces of Santiago and Valparaíso were the most affected, especially the latter which was left without water.

The Army immediately set about organizing and coordinating the assistance and verifying the damages. Likewise a State of Emergency was decreed in the four provinces, I was appointed Head of the Zone for the province of Santiago. Three days later we had in our General Headquarters the first concrete data on the consequences of the earthquake: 32 dead, 182 seriously wounded and 5 injured.

The lack of means in Valparaíso, Santiago, Aconcagua and Coquimbo was very serious. The pipes and filters in Valparaíso had burst causing a shortage of water, and so it was necessary to provide this element. On the afternoon of July 11th León Vilarín turned up at the General Headquarters of the zone. I attended him personally. He came to offer his assistance to the garrison with numerous tanker trucks which I accepted with delight. I later thanked this person whom I had just met and with whom I would have later a more friendly relation for his noble attitude. The country was informed of the damages produced by the earthquake which amounted to 3.068 million escudos, or about 350 million dollars. Those disturbing days helped to cool the spirits in Congress where the law authorizing the nationalization of the large copper mines was unanimously approved. It was promulgated as a Law of the Republic on July 15th. The following day Chile took possession of the copper mines which until then were owned by foreign corporations.

The personnel of inter-city bus services went on illegal strike at the end of July. I therefore asked the government to appoint Brigadier General Alfredo Canales as military intervener. On July 31st I met the leaders of the inter-city buses. We were in that meeting when senator Laura Allende came in to talk with the strikers. I had come across this lady in my youth, but not in her present role as senator. After the protocolary greetings we started talking with the strikers. She considered that the workers were right, and declared that you had to grant what they were asking for before looking for a solution to the problem. In truth, she had come to fan the flames of unrest rather than to propose solutions. This was understood by the leaders who turned against her. They told her that this was a labor problem, not a political one. So strong was their reaction that Mrs Allende left the commander's office furious. On August 4th the strike of the inter-city bus personnel was ended; Brigadier General Alfredo Canales had an outstanding role there.

Those first days of August, the Department of Industry and Commerce requisitioned 1.200 live animals, had them slaughthered and sold the meat to the public at official prices. This way it solved the problem of the shortage

of meat which was getting worse day by day. Requisitions increased, but in turn the products requisitioned continued to diminish.

A piece of news which produced public commotion was the death of the leader of the leftist group MIR, Luciano Cruz. This "idealistic young man" died in strange circumstances, his lifeless body apparently poisoned with gas was taken to the central infirmary by doctor Miguel Enríquez, General Secretary of that ultra-leftist movement. Cruz had also been pardoned by President Allende together with 42 extremists of the MIR. The post mortem examination indicated accidental death.

The preparations for the Great Military Parade of September 19th in Santiago began on August 26th. That morning I was informed of some units which had started their practices in the park.

President Allende travelled those days to Ecuador, Colombia and Perú. On this trip he was accompanied by the three Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the Director of the Police Corps. José Tohá acted as Vice-President during his absence.

During August and September there was uneasiness and tension in the country due to the development of events such as the takeover of industries, transport problems, the revolutionary preaching of Father Arroyo, a Marxist whose name was in the MAPU list of candidates for Minister of Agriculture, the visit of the Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs, Raúl Roa, the distribution of food by the state, the seizure of farms, news of assaults in different parts of the country, the requisitioning of industries and several other events. All these were producing a strong reaction noticeable both in the countryside and in the cities.

In September President Allende ordered that the U.P. agency close its operations in Chile due to the alarming news it had spread during those days; they did not want that the problems we were experiencing should be bruited abroad.

As was foreseen I received reports of the units in the O'Higgins park. The Preparatory Parade took place on September 16th. After reviewing the troops I met the commanders and made the critique in the Tacna Regiment, correcting all that was possible before the Great Military Parade on the anniversary of the Army.

On September 18th a Te Deum Mass was celebrated in the Cathedral and I again had problems with the civil police who practically wanted to replace the escort squadron. They had to accept the orders of the Garrison Commander in view of my firm decision. The route to the Cathedral and the return went without any mishap. That day I accompanied President Allende on his trip from La Moneda to the Cathedral while the troops rendered him honours. I did not ride on that ocassion; the Commander of the Garrison was going for the first time in a vehicle.

That afternoon President Allende adressed a message of greeting to the Army on the celebration of its day of glory.

The Great Military Parade took place on September 19th, and when it was over I approached in the jeep to request permission to withdraw. Allende called me and shaking my hand said: "The presentation which has just taken place is the most evident proof that the Chilean Army and the Armed Forces maintain our tradition. Please express to every chief, officer and man who has taken part, the satisfaction I have felt, as Generalissimo, at seeing how the Armed Forces have shown their capability". To these words I simply replied: "I shall inform them through the Order of the Garrison, Mr President".

After the ceremony in the park there was a cocktail at the Military Club which President Allende attended. He called me and my wife to congratulate me once again for the formation of the troops. I replied laconically: "Thank you, President". Later I left.

We had ten days leave after September 19th. I stayed in the house in Bucalemu resting and receiving rather unwelcome news, such as the definitive closure of the UPI news agency (a measure later rescinded). There was also the intervention of the Telephone Company, the shortage of meat in Santiago, the stoning of the Christian Democratic Party headquarters and the lack of food to serve in snack bars. But the most strangest event of those days was the stroll in a bathing suit taken by a 43-year-old lady farmer whose farm had been expropriated and her remaining land taken over. This lady, Eliana Quezada Moreno, took off her clothes in front of the main door of the presidential palace and remained in her bathing suit. She then walked in front of the guards carrying a sign which read: "This is how we farmers are left by the politicians: naked".

On September 29th I was appointed President of the Central Executive Committee in charge of the national collection "For The Monument to General René Schneider", with the task of proposing the list of persons who would form the aforementioned committee and drawing up the general arrangements to carry out and promote the collection of funds. I took this up with great pleasure because of the affection I had felt for General Schneider.

Early in October the former Director General of the State Railways, Nahum Castro, was arrested, accused of being implicated in the FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces) an extreme leftist movement, which was rather unusual for an official of his rank.

General Carlos Prats called me to his office shortly before accompanying the President on his trip to the North and told me that if Brigadier-General Mandujano was willing to remain another year in the United States I would be appointed Chief of Staff of the Army General Headquarters. I thanked him but added that Brigadier General Mandujano was my friend

and that I did not wish to harm his prospects, and stated that I would keep this news to myself. General Prats added that the new General Secretary of the Army would be Colonel Rigoberto Rubio replacing Colonel Fernando González who would be going to Spain as Military Attaché.

The situation of the country was getting worse every day. The clashes between the authorities and armed persons were a common ocurrence. New armed groups were discovered, more assaults and takeovers. The only good news received during those days in October was of the Nobel Prize awarded to the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda in Stocholm.

On October 22nd a special program was drawn up to pay homage to Major-General Schneider and on the 25th, the anniversary of his death, the Government decreed national mourning. These honours were well deserved by General Schneider, but we were also concerned about the political benefits which were expected as a result.

Expropriations, confrontations, discoveries of arms caches, and arrests, continued throughout Chile. They were everyday occurrences now.

There was also talk during those days about the idea of "democratising" Congress, creating a "single chamber".

The endless visit of Fidel

On November 10th the Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro arrived at Pudahuel airport, and was received under the most strict security measures. President Allende was there to welcome him. From that place he was taken to the house of his ambassador, in the residential part of Santiago, and the two leaders met again that afternoon. The following day President Allende received the Cuban Prime Minister at the Moneda Palace.

Thus began the long visit of Fidel Castro. He went about the country as in his own house, criticised various internal matters of Chile, gave lessons in revolution and offered his support to carry out the revolution.

On November 11th the Cuban ruler paid homage to O'Higgins, our national hero. On that occasion I was in charge of presenting the corresponding honours while he place a wreath at the foot of the monument. You can well understand that paying honours to him was not pleasant for me. I had promised myself never to render honours to international communists; I had managed to avoid this in August when we received the visit of the Minister of Fisheries of the Soviet Union, Alexander Ishkov. On that opportunity I had placed him between the Minister of Defense and myself, so that the person who received the honours was our Minister and not the Russian one. I had to do the same now with Fidel Castro, running the risk that some of the Marxists would notice the trick and started creating problems. Luck was on my side; I received him, I put him in the middle,

between the Minister of Defense and myself, and that way we passed in front of the unit paying honours. I broke the rules, but my conscience remained at peace.

He travelled to Antofagasta, and from there went to Chuquicamata and thence to Iquique. Here he visited the local industries and received many attentions from the Socialist Mayor, Jorge Soria. One of them was to go fishing on the high seas in a ship recently ordered by the Mayor and which, incidentally, he never paid for.

The officers of the Intelligence Service informed me that when the garrison of Iquique held a dinner in his honor, he kept on talking throughout the night to the extent that the officers decided to take turns to be able to sleep for a while before coming on duty the following day. From Iquique he returned to Santiago. He then travelled to Concepción where he was received by the university students, most of them Marxist-Leninists or sympathizers. He told them: "In Chile a revolutionary process is in progress. Our Cuban revolution has also been called a "process" that is it is not yet a "revolution". It is a starting point. Chile is today in that stage".

President Allende and the Cuban ruler travelled later to Punta Arenas visiting the zone of the channels. In this southernmost zone they visited the oil wells in Magallanes, after which they returned to Santiago.

On November 24th Fidel Castro had a meeting with Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez. This prelate, who apparently was an admirer of Castro, spent about thirty minutes with him and gave him a Bible. Their conversation must have been very cordial because a communique of the archbishop stated: "The conversation between the Cardinal and Fidel Castro referred to the role of the Church as the driving force in the process of human liberation as desired by the Gospels and to the protection of the fundamental rights of the religious conscience".

A few days later he went to Rancagua where he visited the "El Teniente" mine. On November 26th I had news that Fidel Castro would visit the School of Mountaineering the following day, where he would be received by the surrogate Commander-in-Chief of the Army and by the Commander of the Military Institutes. They would show him different high mountain exercises.

On November 29th the Minister of Defense told me I was to accompany the Cuban Prime Minister to visit the monument to Ché Guevara that had been erected in his memory in San Miguel district. Castro declared on that occasion that that statue was the first one of its kind he had seen and that he was very proud of it.

The following day he travelled to Valparaíso where he was declared Illustrious Citizen of the city. On December 1st there was a serious incident in Valparaíso against the two rulers, Allende and Castro, when they were leaving a meeting in Plaza Sotomayor and were passing across Plaza

Victoria; they were received by a shower of stones. However the passivity of the citizenry was astonishing in spite of these sporadic acts of popular reaction.

Marxist Bullying

We were living in that climate of tension when on December 1st the Chilean women marched through the streets of Santiago daring the communist anger with their "march of the empty pots". They were rebelling against the shortage of food and deserved full praise. The Chilean women, brave as usual and willing to bear anything, were again giving an example of courage and temper, not hesitating to go into the streets to defend their homes, children and rights so seriously damaged by the socialist regime.

This remarkable show and example of courage was countered with "the black march", formed by a group of agressors which it is necessary to recall even though it provokes repugnance and bitterness. A group of men and youths, members of the Communist Youth, the Elmo Catalán Brigade, the Christian Left, MIR, FER, and other groups, armed with stones, steel balls, chains, slings, razor blades hidden in potatoes, etc., mercilessly attacked the marching women pelting them with their despicable projectiles. The lack of ethics of "the new men" had reached a stage in which even the respect due to women had been lost. I remember that same night a group of civil policemen commanded by their Director attacked some youths who had gathered in Thayer Ojeda and Providencia streets. The police vehicles stopped where they were, and started insulting them without any provocation. The boys, thinking it was a hostile Marxist group, answered their insults back, but matters did not end there; the plainclothes policemen, with great prepotence, got off their vehicles and fired their machine guns at the youths, and went away. Three of them were seriously wounded and left to their luck.

I was informed of this incident a few minutes after it had happened by Paredes himself who described it as "an aggression against the civil police personnel". I went to the place of the events and later to the Public Hospital, where I found the parents of the injured youths, among them Deputy Luis Pareto whom I had had as a cadet in the Military Academy. I was fuming, this criminal action confirmed my apprehensions about the Marxist escalade increasing day by day as it had been foreseen. If they did not hesitate now to murder defenseless youths nobody would, without any doubt, be able to stop them later when they carried out destruction or criminal actions to frighten the eventual opposition they could find. Enrique Loyer Arze, a 22 year old student, was taken badly wounded in his right leg to the Military Hospital after the serious incidents of Providencia avenue between Pedro de Valdivia and Tobalaba streets. There, according to the

reports of eyewitnesses, the student "had been shot point blank and without any provocation on his side". The civil police gave a different version and declared later Loyer "had been arrested for agression, attempt against policemen and for trying to steal a weapon of Government property".

On December 7th the Deputy Luis Pareto sent me a letter about the arbitrary arrest of his son, Luis Jorge Pareto. He also informed me that numerous persons had been illegally detained by the civil police during the last days. He also asked me "to take the corresponding action", though he knew well that this was not possible.

After these incidents we were all convinced that the well-worn words of Allende "the Chilean road to socialism" were an empty slogan. Nor would the part about the empanadas – meat pies – and red wine, be applicable; now it would surely be blood and expoliation. Chileans faced an increasingly hard road whose threatening reality was felt as an ugly nightmare.

With deep concern we observed how "the Chilean road to socialism" was no different in any way with what had happened in other countries under the communist yoke. As Allende had said on May 21st 1971, it was a question of organizing the proletariat as the basis of a new ruling class which would gradually take away from the bourgeoisie the capital and means of production. Its centralization in the hands of the State would allow it to establish the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat", whose first objective is to control firmly the working masses through state control of all the sources of work.

Marxists are always distorting situations; that is what the Popular Unity did when in a document it blamed "fascists" for having started the violence, while they appeared as poor innocent victims suffering from its consequences.

Once again for the fourth time that year, I was appointed Military Head of the Emergency Zone in the province of Santiago on December 2nd, due to the tense situations which were already taking place in some parts of the country. That same day, at a meeting with the Press, I declared: "I will make every effort to reestablish peace and normality in the city". I also announced that the troops were quartered in the second degree and that any person carrying arms would be detained.

I said new acts of violence and agression had been registered and that I had witnessed many of them during my round of inspection through the zone. I added that to improve the control of the area, police action would be reinforced with military patrols. I issued a warning to the discipline of the citizens saying: "I ask the citizenry to obey at once the order to "halt" given by the military lest they be shot, as soldiers are trained to react that way". This would be enforced especially during the hours of curfew.

Several generals left the Army at the end of year. They were called to retirement in accordance with the law. These vacancies in the High Command brought about my promotion to Chief of the General Staff of the Army, as General Prats had already anticipated in a talk we had held some months before. I took up this post on January 3rd 1972.

The Army maneuvers were carried out in December in Villarrica and Pucón. I could not take part due my job in Santiago. At the end of these exercises a critique was made followed by a shooting demonstration attended by President Allende, the Minister of National Defense, Alejandro Ríos Valdivia, and members of the Defense Commitees of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, who had been invited by the Commander-in-Chief.

During a press interview on that occasion, the Commander-in-Chief was asked about the armed groups in the country, and replied as follows: "I think it is important to clarify the concept of "armed groups", because they are something that does not exist yet in Chile to the extent of forcing the Army to intervene. Groups with sticks, helmets and chains require prompt police and legal action as their deeds are in the criminals field".

"Thus a reaction of the Army is not necessary while we do not have groups such as those which have sprung up in another countries, where they have paramilitary training, weapons similar to those used by the armed forces and act in a regular manner. In Chile they are perceived as something new and caused by political party reasons".

The declarations made later by the Head of Intelligence General Mario Sepúlveda, are similar to the above. These appreciations of Generals Prats and Sepúlveda have two omissions:

- Either they really did not know what was happening in Chile concerning persons with paramilitary training who were entering Chile and about the armament coming into the country through various routes.
- Or they followed the game of the Marxist government, trying to calm down the spirits and distract attention minimizing the importance of these actions.

I do not want to believe that there was an agreement between Allende and General Prats, which would have meant betraying the citizens of the country.

Now from the windows of my office I could see how Chile fought the growing subversive activity. Concentrations of extremists armed with spears, slings, helmets, etc., appeared everywhere. There were daily protests of women and children shouting insults, threats and screams and carrying signs with insidious texts and scores of other attitudes full of agressiveness and hatred. It was a period ruled by anarchy and disorder and whose result would soon be the misery of the Chileans, as a result of these actions which only destroyed without constructing anything. The Government continued its fight to gain control of the few groups who could

still hold out economically, but whose activities were inexorable being brought to a standstill. This stressed their tendency to leave the country even if it meant losing most of their personal assets.

Women confront the Popular Unity

As if following a devilish plan, everything advanced towards destruction. The object was to leave the citizens defenseless before the forces organized by the government. For this, the demoralization of the spirits, the moral desintegration and social decomposition advanced step by step. The population was being armed with clandestine weapons, urban and rural guerrilla cells were being prepared and the town and cities were gradually surrounded by proletarian "cordons" so that no one should escape. Simultaneously storm troops, such as the MIR, the VOP, MAPU, etc., were being created and inflation was unleashed to the point where entrepreneurial activity became impossible.

Observing coldly what the Popular Unity was really carrying out, it was evident that it not only controlled the government, but that its power also embraced the economic activities and the cultural and spiritual life of citizens thus extending its tyrannical power over every sector. And when they could not control one of these, they looked for ways to infiltrate it so as to undermine and destroy it from within.

Chileans were slowly waking up from "the communist opium" inoculated in such a sinister way. The first to react were the women. They had instinctively realised the danger which threatened their homes, their children and their husbands, and, as if prompted by a sort of divine inspiration, acted with exemplary and moving courage. They did not hesitate to go out into the streets shouting their anguish and beating empty pans in protest. Faced with cowardly attacks they fought bravely against their agressors, sometimes at the risk of their lives. Many were hurt and wounded when they confronted by organized extremist groups. But the strength of the race, the Spanish and Araucanian ancestry, seem to have given them the necessary courage to face their cowardly agressors.

Later they would be the ones who drew the rest of the population to fight, until in the end the crowds clamoured for the resignation of Allende. When he did not resign they were the ones who asked, begged and demanded the intervention of the Armed Forces.

On January 3rd 1972 I handed over the post of General Commander of the Santiago Garrison to Brigadier General Héctor Bravo Muñoz, while I took up my position as Chief of the General Staff of the Army, a post I had always wished for professional reason.

Once again I was beginning a change of activities which, during that year, led to many interesting things in my life.

CHAPTER II
Chief of the General Staff of the Army

I have already mentioned that the first days of January 1972 I assumed the post of Chief of the General Staff of the Army, which filled me with satisfaction. General Prats had told me about it months before when he referred to my destination for 1972. That is why I began studying the documents and problems of that high institute in due time so that when I assumed the post I had a fairly good idea of the situation there.

During the period I remained as Chief of the General Staff, I carried out various activities apart from my normal obligations.

I travelled to Mexico City between September 8th and 24th to attend the 162nd anniversary of the independence of that country. I also accepted an invitation from General Underwood, Chief of the American forces in the Panamá Canal, and later travelled to Honduras and Nicaragua where I stayed three days.

In November I replaced General Carlos Prats as acting commander of the Army while he was carrying out ministerial activities. I had to substitute for him on several occasions until I was definitely appointed on August 23rd 1973.

I began to receive alarming information about what was happening in the country through the Intelligence Service of the Army, and to prepare the means to face a Marxist uprising against the people.

The Marxist "Paradise" gets worse

Many times I looked helplessly out of my office windows together with some officers at the growing subversive activity. It was a period of anarchy and violence, during which the government tried to gain control of every national activity.

During those days everything was heading towards the economic and social destruction of the country. The Popular Unity not only wanted the control of the government, but also intended to control the economic activities and the cultural and spiritual life of the Chileans. It was trying to gain absolute power, and to this end it was creating a sort of tyrannical power over every segment of society. It took advantage of the passiveness of an appreciable sector of the population which accepted all that was happening with great conformity, so as not to get involved in situations which could affect them.

There were several significant incidents during March, April and June. They allowed us to evaluate the movements of the Popular Unity and to see how it spread its vigorous tentacles, taking up key positions in the public administration. Marxist virulence was becoming more aggressive every day, and as they felt stronger they became more unbearable. Expropriations and illegal takeovers of large farms and small plots of agricultural land continued bringing increasing anarchy and paralyzing the work in the country. On the other hand people lost respect for authority; street fights and battles became a common sight through the city streets. Likewise the concept of private property became obsolete, surpassed by the "progressive" concept which plainly and openly denied that right.

Apart from these actions which altered daily life, the Government carried out an intense and active international propaganda, preparing a vast advertising campaign. Numerous foreign intellectuals, artists and journalists of Marxist views were invited to Santiago to take part in the "Operation Truth", that is, to observe how we advanced towards "Marxist Socialism" within a democratic system. Their distorted information and lies were spread throughout the world. Everything was going on smoothly for them, and Chile would soon be the new proletarian paradise.

My initial fear that the Marxist government was leading the country to destruction was coming true. The race to implant socialism in Chile would stop at nothing; it could even end in a civil war.

Uneasiness in the Army

The work in the General Staff continued normally with evaluations, plans, orders, acquisitions, etc. Its functions, which are the heart and mind of the Army provide action and activity to the thoughts and decisions of its Com-

mander-in-Chief. It is there where evaluations and proposals are made within the mistique of the men at arms.

I usually met a group of Generals at lunch time and we used to comment on the daily aggravation of shortages and on the unpleasant action of an immoral and corrupt press that did not stop at slander, infamy and lies. We used to say, in distress, that history would judge us severely, and we asked ourselves what words would be used to condemn us when it was said we had witnessed the destruction of our country without moving a finger.

However I always told them that to make the Army act it was necessary that the citizenry should feel the absolute need for it. At first we thought that a favourable reaction from the Moneda was possible. I ordered the Director of Intelligence to study "the possibility that the Government should change its attitude", an evaluation which would be prepared with the information at the disposal of the Army. The study of these possibilities was handed over and dispatched by that Direction on April 12th 1972 in a confidential report to the Director of Operations of the Army. A separate envelope containing a document with the conclusions of the analyses accompanied the report. It was the first step in breaking the "taboo" against making public a study of this nature. The study reached the following conclusions:

– Subversion and important armed actions in zones or isolated areas of the country.

– The leftist extremist groups, headed by the MIR, MCR, FTR, an other violentist groups, adequately organized can unleash urban and rural subversion in different areas of the country.

– It is feasible that the polarization of some working, student and intellectual groups could make them join a common cause with the extremist organizations.

– The subversive groups of extreme political tendencies will continue developing activities against public order with increasingly bigger repercussions which any moment may surpass the capacity of the Police Force to control them. It will bring chaos and subversion until it paralyzes the country obliging the Armed Forces to intervene militarily in support of the legally constituted government and to reestablish the institutional order.

– The above could take place in gradual stages or simultaneously depending on the following circumstances:

– While there exist a lack of authority and the groups count on the benevolent tolerance of the government, the extremist groups will continue increasing their organization and training and developing isolated violent actions in different parts of the country (urban and rural sectors); but they will not leave much time between one action and the other in order to keep the authorities permanently worried.

After lengthy conclusions this report finished with the following scenarios:

– If events lead towards this possibility or materialize, it is possible that what we have termed possibility N° 2 takes place, namely:

– The Executive and Legislative powers polarizing discontent, hatred and reciprocal recriminations could produce at any moment a breakdown of the constitutional system. It could provoke an unsurmountable conflict of powers that would degenerate in violent armed actions of the groups related to the Powers in conflict, leading to a civil war which would oblige the Armed Forces to intervene.

– The above could happen in succesive or simultaneous stages of the following events:

– The continued or increased agitation of the masses together with the consolidation of armed civilian organization and an increase of illegal action both in the countryside and in the cities.

– The continued propaganda of both sectors each trying to influence public opinion and channel it towards its own side.

– The materialization of an unsurmountable conflict between the Executive and Legislative Powers without a constitutional solution.

– Once the constitutional roads to solving the conflict created are closed, a *de facto* action is set up to lead the country towards socialism by means of the conquest of power by force on one side, or the elimination of the Marxist government by the opposition on the other.

– A degree of disaffection in the Armed Forces or parts of it, polarizing its participation towards one or other of the antagonic groups, could produce an imbalance of power and provoke a serious breach of discipline and cohesion which could lead them to a definition through violent means.

The amount of information delivered by the Intelligence Direction was such that there was no solution but to actualize the Security Planning of the Army with the utmost discretion so as to act as a catalyst in the case of a possible civil war.

The document stated that with the progressive advance of the conflict between the Executive and Legislative Powers a moment would come when there would no constitutional alternative to confrontation. The worst part of it all was that this possibility became more feasible every day because the position of the two sides was becoming increasingly harder. Thus a moment would come when the Armed Forces would no longer be able to remain aloof, even less if one of the Powers, the Executive, was creating a paramilitary force which was constantly growing and becoming more powerful. Nor was it possible to think that the Military institutions would walk out of the political stage, because that would mean the destruction of the Legislative an Judicial Powers, and then, controlling all the

available forces and with its hands free, the victorious political power would find no obstacle in liquidating the power of the Armed Forces.

Something else was also causing uneasiness to most of us in those moments: it was the fact that, according to rumours, the Marxists had managed to infiltrate the Armed Forces and the Police Corps with a considerable number of sympathizers. The action of these people, if it were successful, would have meant the end of Chile. However, these despondent thoughts were cast aside by the optimistic report received from the Intelligence Service on the subject, which discarded that possibility. There may have been a few people infiltrated, but not many.

A civil war would be naturally fatal for the country. It was necessary to prevent it at all costs. Everything indicated that the Allende government would persist in its totalitarian desires; therefore the Army had no alternative but to act. Everything should be carried out in secrecy to avoid delation and the vigilance permanently effected over us, but the action had to be carried out come what may.

The Army decides to take the initiative

It was thus that I drafted in my own hand on June 23rd 1972, and with the utmost discretion and care, a circular letter with my signature which I sent to eight organisms of the General Staff. They would have the mission of updating some concepts of the "Interior Security Planning". With this we were taking the first step in changing the defensive concept of the Security Plan into a more offensive and agressive instrument. The previous plan of static character would be changed into one of great mobility.

During those days we noticed how the violentist activity continued developing with greater intensity. We were convinced Allende would not yield an inch. Therefore I decided on July 9th to hasten the planning, even if it meant the risk of losing all we had done, I prepared another document wich I called "Memorandum" destined to reset the basic guidelines in order to speed up the general plan. This was now to have a totally offensive character and the Army was to adopt it forthwith. Due to the delicate nature of this document which contained secret matters I restricted its distribution to the Directors of Intelligence and Operations services. I only left one copy in the office of the Secretary of the General Staff. With this step a new conception of the security plans began.

Until August, daily life went by in a climate of violence and tension which was dividing the Chilean family even more. There was great conmotion when the Government had to face the situation of the Argentine guerrillas who had escaped from Rawson (Chubut) and had entered Chile through Puyehue. Allende first made a show of offering them asylum and protection, while talking of sending them back, etc., and in the end he allowed

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them to leave the country freely. On the other hand in Concepcion, Police Corporal Exequiel Caroca was murdered, shot from a window of the Socialist Party Headquarters. National life was getting everyday more day tense though strangely enough no national or international organization ever spoke of Human Rights nor attacked Chile about it. Had they forgotten about them? Or is it that when murderers and transgressors are Marxists those Human Rights have no value?

On July 5th the Director of the Academy of War, Brigadier General Herman Brady, came to my office for a long talk. I invited him to lunch in my office and we came to the conclusion that the Academy was in a condition to plan the tactical action of the units which would operate in Santiago. My last recommendation was that he should employ only reliable men, – and I stressed this point. We embraced, and when he was leaving I told him: "We must be extremely careful in view of any indiscretion or denunciation which could occur. You may be sure that if the Marxists know what is happening, not only our blood will run but also that of our families". Brady's reply was laconic, "It will be kept in absolute secrecy".

During July and August I was called by President Allende to ask me when we would decide to buy weapons from Russia. Looking me in the eyes he said: "General this is a unique opportunity, our friends are offering us 500 millions dollars in armament on credit with an annual interest rate of only 2% and a 15 years period of grace. If interest is paid on time the debt will be reduced to half after 5 years and the same happens at the end of the next 5 years, that is to say, the country will pay only 125 millions instead of 500 millions.

"This is a unique opportunity for the Army to be well equipped and armed". I replied: "Mr President all this is being studied by the respective committees. They are studying the proposal because you must also consider that there is a stock of weapons worth several millions of dollars which has to be considered in the study". The President did not insist on the purchase but became red with anger and only said: "All right, General, but this is a unique opportunity of which we must take advantage".

The last time I was called by him, just before September, he was quite upset or pretended to be so in order to cause me fear. I did not lose my temper and merely repeated what I had said before which left him fuming.

In Central America

On August 31st, a few days before travelling to México I fell in bed with a strong viral bronchitis and high temperature. As days passed and I did not recover I summoned to my house my adjutant, Major Claudio Lobos, and put him in charge of the preparations for my trip.

One day before the departure I was still rather weak. My doctor, however, told me that with the change of climate I could travel because I would recover completely during the journey.

Such was the case. We departed from Arturo Merino Benítez Airport in a Braniff plane which stopped in Lima, where we were cordially received by the head of the General Staff of the Peruvian Army. After a short stay we continued to Panamá, where we arrived past midnight.

In Tocumen (now Omar Torrijos) Airport, Lieutenant Colonel Orlando Jerez and the American Colonel Gerald Sills together with other American officers were waiting for us, and took us to our lodgings in the guest house of the Fort. They also handed me an intense program of visits.

Social activity was strenuous. We received many attentions from the resident Chileans as well as from the officers of the Fort, many of whom had been in Chile and had Chilean friends.

Professionally speaking the most interesting part was the talks with the Commander of the Canal Zone, General Underwood, who received me in his General Headquarters with the honours due to a Chief of State. We talked about Chilean war material; I told him it was urgent that the United States should sell us tanks of any type because we were under strong pressure from the Russians and from our own government. I must say that this General tried by every means to get approval for a transaction in our favour but he received only negative answers from the State Department. There came a moment when I had the impression that the members of that Department were Russian officials and not Americans.

Today, when I think over that situation and other similar cases, I realize how little that country understands our mentality, when it declares that they are our friends, while behaving as they do towards Latin America.

During the four days we spent in the Canal Zone we visited Portobello, where we learnt its colorful history of treasure and ambitions. We listened attentively the story of Morgan the pirate who, with a handful of men, assaulted and plundered the city. Visiting the ruins of old Panamá you go back to the times of a flourishing and conquering Spain.

With my wife and children together with Colonel Sills who kindly accompanied us, we visited the installations of the canal and admired the wonderful engineering of its sluices in full function.

In Colón we visited a shop where I bought two transistor radios for my children who were very happy. We were very careful as we had been warned that groups of thieves snatched the packages from the hands of shoppers running away at top speed. Luckily we did not have to regret any loss.

The American officers and their wives offered us a gala dinner which my wife and I enjoyed very much. It allowed us to become closer to these officers of the American Army and their wives.

From Panamá we went to Honduras. While we were waiting for the plane to depart and to enjoy the last moments I decided to try my luck in the slot machines. When I made one work it emptied out delivering to me more than a hundred dollars in one dollar coins. I kept the hundred dollars and put the remaining coins into the machine. I made it work again and once again I received a hundred dollars. While I was counting the money the loudspeakers called the passengers of the plane going to México. We obeyed and after saying good bye to Lieutenant Colonel Jerez and Colonel Sills we embarked.

However when we were already flying my wife noticed she had left her fur coat on a counter of the airport. We called Colonel Jerez immediately by radio but time passed and the only answer we go was that the coat was no longer there. We regretted the loss, but on the other hand we had won more than 200 dollars which compensated in part the loss.

After a qúiet flight the plane landed in Tegucigalpa where we stayed three days. As we had booked a room at the hotel there we were able to settle in comfortably. The Chilean ambassador, an old friend, attended us kindly and invited us to see the city with its new buildings, parks and monuments.

What impressed us most during our tour of the city was the luxurious Maya Honduras Hotel, where we had dinner that evening. This hotel is in the Republic of Chile Avenue. I asked the Ambassador about General Osvaldo López in order to greet him, but he was not at that time in Tegucigalpa. I was only able to talk with his adjutant and send him my regards.

The fact that I knew General López helped us to solve a problem which left us in an uncomfortable situation concerning our trip to México. That same day the airline company which was to take us to Nicaragua announced that our flight would be delayed for two days, whereas I had to be in México City the following day. That unpleasant situation obliged me again to contact General López's adjutant, and after telling him about my predicament I asked him to place at my disposal an Air Force plane to travel to Nicaragua so as to take from there a combination flight to the Mexican capital.

This officer, very kindly consulted his chief on the telephone and received his immediate authorization to put a plane at our disposal. Likewise, President Somoza, who had been informed by the Chilean Ambassador of what had happened, solved our problem. Our Ambassador in Managua informed me that we had tickets on one of the airplanes of the "Nica" Company owned by the Somoza family. The following day General López's plane took us to Managua where we changed to a Boeing plane of the "Nica" Company which flew us on to México City.

One day in México

The Chilean Military Attaché, Colonel Agustín Toro, and his wife were waiting for us at the airport when we arrived in México City and offered us lodging at their house. We were also received by officials of the Mexican protocol, our Ambassador and several officers of the Mexican Army. We were taken from the airport to the hotel while our children were taken to the house of Colonel Toro. Thus they stayed in a safe place, while we were able to carry out our social obligations with more ease.

A Mexican Army major presented himself in our VIP suite of the hotel and told me that he would be my adjutant, I immediately put him in contact with my adjutant, Major Lobos, so that they should coordinate the activities during my stay.

That same day we attended a lunch in a club, where I had the opportunity of greeting about 300 uniformed Generals, some of them very old and who had reached this rank as heroes of the Revolution. The Mexican adjutant informed me they have their own adjutant and a salary as active members of the Army. When he began his introductions he would present me as "General Augusto Pinochet, Chief of the General Staff of the Chilean Army", but towards the end when we had greeted about 200 he had cut it down to "General Pinochet".

The lunch was preside by the Minister of Defense, General Hermenegildo Cuenca Díaz, to whom each military mission gave a present. In turn he sent us a memento of our stay.

We had that afternoon free, of which my wife and I took advantage to visit that lovely city. We noticed a great number of indians, some very poor which impressed us very much.

Next day, September 14th, I went out with the Mexican Military Attaché to Chile. We visited many shops to buy some souvenirs to take back to Chile. In the afternoon I was invited to visit the Military Academy and the War Academy, where I had the opportunity of talking to Mexican officers who have a good professional level. This last invitation had been made by General De la Fuente, whom I had met in Chile when he was the Military Attaché of his country.

Later, General De la Fuente invited my wife and me to visit a satellite town near the capital and on our return took us to his house where he lived very simply and soberly.

A military parade took place on the following morning. I could see there a division of mounted mariachis who passed trotting in front of the Government Palace. Some of the horses carried machine guns and heavy weapons. The tanks drew our attention because, in spite of being of world War II vintage, they were kept in very good condition.

President Echeverría greeted the delegations during the evening and night. When it was my turn he made very flattering remarks about Chile and wished the best for Allende. After the greetings we passed to the great hall which was rather crowded. From the balconies we could see a crowd below which appeared to be having a very good time, amidst Mexican songs and frying food whose smells were wafted into the Palace through the windows.

While we were looking out from the balconies, a shower of eggs filled with flour was thrown up by the crowd as an expression of happiness towards the Government. Unluckily one of them hit an American Admiral, who was left as if covered with meringue. On that occasion I met General Westmoreland, a few days after politicians had played their usual tricks on him. At the end of the reception we went down to the cocktail tables, which was really a cold buffet. I was told that it had been calculated for 10.000 persons. There were about 6.000 present. This lavish and ostentatious dinner did not fit in well with a country whose population lives on tamales with chili peppers.

When we were leaving the Palace we saw a group of Yucateca indians who played their instruments very well and were singing lovely Mexican songs. The Mexican Military Attaché to Chile, who was with us, asked my wife if she wanted to listen to "María Bonita" which was rendered with real feeling by the indians. The vocalist was outstanding for her lovely voice. We retired to our hotel later, to rest.

Next day the Military Attaché, Colonel Toro, invited us to visit the archaelogical zone of Teotihuacán, about 50 km from México City. These pyramids are architectonic jewels about 125 meters high. We also visited Lake Xochimilco in the afternoon, a dirty, fetid and untidy place but which has a sort of charm that makes it attractive. It is situated in the southern part of the city and you can take a tour in launches decorated with flowers. Some of them carry a piano and mariachis playing jolly melodies, which produces a pleasant feeling both to the eye and ear.

We returned to the hotel and had the rest of the afternoon free, which I spent walking with my wife through México City. The Mexican Military Attaché invited us to listen to music at a place famous for its rotating tower. It was a novelty at that time. The following day we were left free to go through the city and visit its magnificent shops. After a rest we visited the Ruffino Tamayo Museum and the National Museum of Antropology, both built without regard for cost.

That evening the Chilean Ambassador invited us to his house. During the meeting I noticed that all his questions were put with the intention of learning my thoughts and ideas. I kept a discreet silence and in the end he believed that I was "a square military man" who had thoughts only for his institution and war activities.

We bought some souvenirs and presents that day. the Mexican adjutant gave me a collection of magazines in which some of his articles had been published. I thanked him and, in turn, gave him a military souvenir, a plaque as a memento of our visit.

On September 18th, after bidding farewell to the Mexican authorities and the Chilean diplomats, we boarded a Braniff plane for the United States.

We always remember with pleasure the five days of rest we spent in Miami. Our stay in that city was very pleasant, we stayed in a comfortable hotel from which we visited the beaches. To move around, we rented a car. We drove to Orlando and visited Disney World. Years have passed and even now my children Marco Antonio and Jacqueline remember with pleasure the moments we spent there.

On September 23rd we boarded the plane back to Chile. While we were preparing our return my adjutant informed me that he had received news that General Canales had beed called to retirement by the President of the Republic. I was really sorry because he was a good friend and an excellent officer. On my arrival General Prats informed me that his retirement was due to his outspoken remarks in front of an admiral, who in turn had reported these to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army who had ordered his retirement. I have always kept a special affection for General Canales, for his military conditions and his uprightness, which is why his retirement affected me deeply. But I learnt my lesson: the military reaction should be prepared within a very closed circle.

Strikes

Problems became increasingly serious all over the country. There was money but nothing to buy with it. In October the National Confederation of Truck-Owners ordered a national stoppage and soon commerce and the small industries adopted the same attitude. To counteract the action of the unions, shopkeepers and manufacturers, the Government then resorted to the most arbitrary measures imaginable. With orders devoid of any legal backing they violated property rights, they intensified the takeovers of industries and many persons were temporarily jailed. Marxists official acted with arbitrary arrogance imposing their ideas by force without respecting anything, and acting as if they owned the country, they broke down the doors or forced the locks of the shops they found closed. People who tried to resist or oppose their arbitrarities were beaten.

The incapacity of the political institutions to put an end to the illegal and inconstitutional excesses of the Government led vast sectors of the population to take matters into their hands.

One of the reactions was the October strike. It was the most important of its kind due to the intense disturbance it produced in national life. It

seriously compromised the stability of the government. To face this situation which was placing the Popular Unity in an uncomfortable position Allende in the first days of November appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, as Minister of Interior. He presented this nomination as the best guarantee the government could offer the Chileans for them to put end to their strike. The workers returned to their jobs as before. On November 2nd, due to the absence of the Commander-in-Chief, I was appointed to replace him as substitute Commander-in-Chief.

The Arms Control Law was being discussed in Congress during those days. The Marxists who insisted that they did not have any weapons and that they were against civil war found it very difficult to oppose this bill. Foreseeing the possibility of its approval, I prepared orders to raid those places where, according to our Intelligence Service, there were stores, arsenals or underground deposits containing weapons, ammunition and explosives.

I remember that one of the congressmen who took most care to see that the bill should become law was Senator Juan de Dios Carmona. He hastened its passage in such a way that the law was finally approved, published and enforced at once. There is no doubt that it was this law which hurt the Government most, but I am also convinced that Allende signed it as a tactical measure to distract the attention of the people and improve the image of the government given the situation of the country.

Visiting "the elder brother"

Allende went abroad on December 1972, and the Minister of the Interior, General Carlos Prats, assumed as Vice President. I think that this appointment was crucial form him, for whereas before it was possible to comment with him about some unfavourable aspects of the Government, from that moment on he absolutely rejected any criticism, to the extreme of supporting every action the Popular Unity wished to carry out. I undestood then we could not count on him for our plans, and that the action we were preparing had to be forcibly carried out in order to save the country.

I have written down some milestones of Allende's trip.

The tour would last 14 days and would include México, the United States (the United Nations Headquarters), the Soviet Union and Cuba.

At the beginning of his trip he took advantage of a technical stopover in Lima to meet the President of Perú, General Juan Velasco Alvarado, with whom he talked for an hour. The following day the press informed about the meeting of the Presidents. They reaffirmed their solidarity "against every sort of imperialist aggresion". They also talked about the economic aggresion of the industrialized countries against the developing nations. They talked about copper which, in the words of Velasco Alvarado,

"would be tackled as a common problem". Regarding the restitution of the "Huáscar" – the Peruvian ironclad captured by Chile in the War of the Pacific – Allende replied: "Everything that implies solidarity must be dealt with", and gave then some vague explanations which probably no one understood, not even himself.

In México he was received by President Echeverría and his wife. On that occasion the Mexican President said among other things that "México believes in the battle for freedom that President Allende is waging, and which shows clear signals of victory". He alluded to Latin American unity and to the preservation of the freedom of the countries of the area.

In his reply, Allende declared: "We do not want subjection or colonialism, but independence. We want peace not war".

From Guadalajara and before Allende left for New York, the two presidents issued the following joint declaration:

"The Presidents of México and Chile are agreed on the need and importance of a sincere an open dialogue within the bonds of solidarity of all the Latin American countries, independent of the differences which may exist on the ideological level or in the political-social structures of each country, to reach agreement on economic integration. They also concurred on the usefulness of dialogue of this nature in order to find common denominators which will facilitate the presentation of proposals in all the international forums directed towards a better defense of the Latin American interests".

The declaration continued:

"Negotiations were satisfactorily concluded whereby the Bank of México would establish credit lines in favor of the Central Bank of Chile. They will be used for the acquisition of primary goods and for the purchase of capital goods under mutually satisfactory conditions".

During the meeting they also expressed their satisfaction that the Mexican private banks had oppened credit lines to Chile. Allende confirmed Chilean support for the efforts of President Echeverría to get all the nations of the continent to ratify the treaty of Tlatelolco on denuclearization. Chile also backed the Mexican proposal to obtain a greater representation of the under developed countries in the United Nations.

President Allende arrived in New York to speak at the United Nations Headquarters in a Plenary session of the General Assembly. During his address he talked about the revolutionary road Chile was taking, about the financial blockade, the aggresion against the Chilean nation by the transnational companies, the nature of transnational corporations, the Third World countries, Latin America and underdevelopment. He also declared that Chile was not alone in the world political panorama and finished off with a reference to a new stage in the international order.

After carrying out numerous diplomatic and protocolar activities in the

United Nations, he boarded a Russian plane and flew to Moscow. On his arrival he was "warmly" received by a crowd of about 100 thousand.

President Nikolai V. Podgorny told Allende that his country and the other socialist republics supported the "revolutionary renovation" which had been imposed in Chile. He made this statement at a dinner he gave in honour of Allende, saying that: "the people and Government of Chile are solving complicated problems and overcoming the internal and external reaction, which is resorting to every possible means of economic and political pressure. They are trying to divert Chile from the road it has chosen, and thus frustrate the process of revolutionary renewal and to strike a hard blow at the progressive forces of Latin America".

However, he added:

> "We well know by our own experience that if a country knows how to attract and unite the genuinely patriotic forces, the working classes, the peasants and the middle class, and if its action is constant and manages to carry out the announced program, no reactionary force will be able to divert the working people from the road that they have chosen".

And Podgorny continued:

> "You are not alone in this struggle. On your side are the sympathy and support of the Soviet Union, of the Socialist sister nations and the solidarity of all the contemporary progressive forces".

He also declared that he looked with satisfaction at the increasingly friendly relations and cooperation between Chile and the Soviet Union. He finished his speech stating:

> "Life is proving that the strengthening of relations between the Soviet Union and the Latin American States is providing mutual benefits and is in agreement with the interest of he peoples, in creating more favourable conditions and prospects for their progress and independent development".

During a gala dinner in his honour at the Kremlin on December 6th 1972 Allende declared the following:

"The international imperialist monopolies have unleashed an economic agression against my country". But he stressed that "we are not alone; we count on the solidarity of many governments and peoples, and receive the understanding of many industrialized countries of Europe, as well as from the countries of the Socialist Community which have shown great fraternal solidarity towards us". "This refers mainly to the Soviet Union which we call" "Our Elder Brother".

At the end of his visit to Moscow Allende declared he was confident that the talks and agreements reached would greatly strengthen the fraternal relations between the two countries.

After a tour of 14 days through different countries President Allende returned to Chile.

Treacheries and frauds

One of my first measures as acting Commander-in-Chief was to asses the morale in the different units. It was imperative to sound out the mood and the state of mind of the troops and check on the real state of affairs concerning the Marxist compaign to penetrate the Armed Forces and the Police Corps. In January, February and March I visited all the Army units from Arica to Tierra del Fuego. In each of them I met the officers and non commissioned officers and talked with them; I learnt of their worries, and their concern about the situation which the nation was enduring. The results of the inspection were favourable and I was only concerned about the units in Calama and Talca, where I found commanders who had a very "progressive" attitude even if they did not profess Marxist ideas. All the rest, without exception, were opposed to the course on which the Government was taking the country. They all wished for security and tranquility for their children, for their home, for the Army and for their country.

While General Prats was Vice-President there were no crimes or thefts, but as soon as Allende returned, the expropriations and takeover of land and industries continued as before.

Likewise the Russian fishing ships, chartered at a high cost, created an unfair competition for the Chilean fishermen. However, this situation did not draw public attention. It is strange how human beings lose their sensibility and get used to the most outlandish things, and the people had grown accustomed to these procedures which had become normal in national life.

In those days we received a report which impressed us very much. It said that the Chilean government was giving away its wealth to Russia, handing over "secret reports" about copper and on the possible existence of uranium mines in the north. It was a clear betrayal of the country and what is worse, it was carried out by the government itself.

Within this state of chaos which now included acts of treason and unrestrained criminal activities, a relative respect for the Judiciary and its members had been maintained upto now which its members well deserved; however during those days of 1973 our respected Supreme Court, whose proceedings have been always exemplary, was attacked through the press with unusual malevolence and brutality.

The parliamentary elections in March 1973 provided an unexpected result: the Popular Unity appeared to have increased its share of the vote. These surprising results were explained later by a team of experts from the Catholic University who, in a detailed study, proved the existence of fraud on the part of the Government coalition. The undisputed facts obtained showed that these results had been possible thanks to a large scale electoral manipulation by the Government.

After the elections I ordered the General Staff of the Army to make a new evaluation of the political scenario. According to its conclusions there was no possibility of putting an end to the disorder, violence, institutional destruction, political immorality and economic disaster to which Marxist totalitarism was leading us. Consequently, at the end of March the officers who were preparing to overthrow the government were absolutely convinced there was no other way but to act by the force of arms. To do so we tightened the security measures in our planning.

Marxists kept a strict control over military activities, specially over generals and troop commanders. They had a record sheet of each of us (in October 1973 the Intelligence Service made a gift to me of my card which they did not have time to destroy). This circumstance obliged us to take security measures for the Commanders and their families, which in case of emergency would take refuge in the regiments for their protection.

In April the battle against the Communist proposal to establish the ENU (Unified National Education) intensified. In order to attract public sympathy for its plan, the Government organised meetings to which all sectors of the public were invited, so as to try and convinced parents, tutors and pupils of the benefits of the system. The Minister of Education gave us a talk on this system which was held in the lecture hall of the General Staff Headquarters, to which were also invited the Commanders in Chief and representatives of the other armed services. I think no one foresaw the rebuff which the Minister of Education received from the officer corps of the three armed services which refused to accept this imposition of the Marxist Government.

I remember the case of Colonel Espinoza who spoke angrily and harshly about the system which the Government wished to impose and which the majority of parents rejected. As a result, our Commander-in-Chief reacted violently against the Army officers who had opposed the system and who with their questions had hammered the Minister.

During that same period the Army Intelligence Service handed me a copy of a book widely sold in the working class districts, whose title was "Armed Insurrection" by a certain A. Neuberg. The book was truly a "Handbook of Crime".

Allende called me in one afternoon to talk about everything except my military activities. At the end of the meeting I told him that the book "Armed Insurrection" was being sold in the working class districts. "I know it", he replied; to which I replied: "But this is very serious". He repeated: "Yes, I know it". I decided to leave.

The situation was getting more distressing every time and the room for maneuver was diminishing. It was no longer possible to proceed in stages; the Army had to act as a whole. But how could we prevent these preparations from being noticed by the Government? As a Chilean I rejec-

ted a civil war. I did not wish to see my country immersed in a bloodbath nor overwhelmed by a terrible fratricidal struggle whose consequences would be destruction and death and a total setback of all the activities of the country which could take years to recover.

The last days of June 1973 were characterized by the brutal sufferings of the people. When I remember them today the feeling of bitterness and pain returns. It was necessary for the Marxists to destroy the Chilean institutional system and with that aim their attacks against the Office of the Comptroller General, the Supreme Court, the National Congress and other Institutions and persons grew more intense. These attacks were made under any pretext and in countless ways.

At last the whole nation was witness to the strong reaction of parents and tutors against the stubborn and tenacious imposition of the Government to indoctrinate the children of Chile through the ENU. This was followed by the strike of the copper miners during which there were a number of heroic deeds and manly reactions. These workers received remarkable support from the public and especially from young people.

During various meetings which I had with Government authorities, I often heard them talking openly about "the Commanders", who controlled urban centers with paramilitary forces, and disparaging the valuable resistance of those workers who tried to prevent the collapse of their companies to save their jobs, as in the case of the Paper Company. The members of the Popular Unity acted harshly against those considered as submissive to the bourgeoisie.

Add to all this the campaign about the threat of civil war with continual marches of men, women and children shouting slogans. The slogan "no to civil war" was really a psychological ploy intended to convey the image that they were against such extremes. To this state of chaos one must add the suffering of the people from lack of resources and food. Housewives were obliged to register in the JAPs – supply and prices committees – the communist organizations which controlled the distribution of food and which were used as a means of breaking the will of Chileans by the threat of hunger.

At the end of April 1973 the Commander-in-Chief handed me the command of the institution for the second time, while he visited the Soviet Union and other countries. During the time he was absent I held some meetings with the Directors of the Departments of Operations and Intelligence. This last stressed the extreme gravity of the situation in which we were living not only in Santiago but in most of the country. On May 28th during a meeting with the Generals of the Army, just before the return of the Commander in Chief, I issued and signed a "General Directive on Interior Security from the Commander-in-Chief", a document which contained the update version of the Interior Security Plan to save the country

from the chaos to which the Government was leading us through the anarchy and subversion which it increasingly encouraged.

The measures contemplated therein were to be adopted subject to two basic conditions. In the first place the plan in force could not be changed until the new document was made known throughout the services and if possible put into practice in all its fundamental parts, which was the only way to remain invulnerable during the period of adjustment. In the second place it stated that nothing should be done in an isolated fashion nor without synchronization with all the units, because the passiveness or negative action of any one unit in a specified area could mean the beginning of a civil war. Thus, if by any misfortune opposing forces arrived in a zone, the ones nearest would immediately act as harshly as possible to prevent the initiation of enemy operations which could affect the whole. Therefore the prior and necessary requisite for the beginning of the action was to alert all the units of the country without awakening the least suspicion, which meant keeping a permanent state of alert without causing mistrust. Thus is was imperative that all the Army troops should respond to a single order.

The moments we were living were trascendental for the future of Chile. Any mistake on our side would be not only fatal for us but for the whole country.

The first measures we had to adopt in General Headquarters, where it was possible that Marxists had infiltrated one of their own men who would inform the Government about our planning, was to carry out our preparations with the utmost discretion lest there be any leakage. Any mistake would be fatal for our plans. In other words the failure of this military action would mean the death sentence of thousands of people and that international Communism would definitely build its foundations in Chile over their bodies.

To prevent any leakage we employed the sectorial system of work in which the various subjects are not apparently related, but when united at the right moment mesh perfectly into a whole. Thus we created separate compartments whereby each group knew only its parts and nothing else. Moreover, we took every kind of precaution with those persons taking part in these activities which, on principle, were to be carried out by a minimun number of people all absolutely reliable.

I must declare that thanks to these "cover up" precautions the different planning operations were kept in the most absolute secrecy right up to the end. These were the first steps towards freedom on which the fate of Chile hinged. A false step would mean failure and the loss of every possibility of saving the country from Communism.

CHAPTER III
Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Army

From January to March I continued as acting Commander-in-Chief while General Prats was in the Minister of Interior. During those months I had talks with officers and non-commissioned officers of the Army and was able to assess the degree of support for the action we were preparing against the regime.

During those days the calamitous situation of the various State enterprises came to light. Soquimich —the Nitrate Mining Company— suffered a loss of 42 millions dollars during 1972. Add to this the deficit of one thousand million escudos from the state-owned textile industries. Codelco, the Chilean Copper Corporation, had lost 500 million dollars during the period 1971-1972. Then there also appeared a series of illicit transactions which proved the ineffectiveness of the Popular Unity experts. Meantime the shortage of food grew worse every day and the grocery shops had nothing to sell.

The printing of money without backing increased daily (according to Senator Baltra it had already reached 60 million escudos per day) and black markets flourished everywhere. The measures adopted by the Finance Minister were aimed at exerting a better control over the Chilean population by manipulating the distribution of food as a means of pressuring those who dared to oppose the Goverment or even remain neutral.

To the above we must add the plan to divide and decapitate the Armed Forces, the expropriation of businesses, the proposal to implant the ENU

so as to create "the new man", the abuse of legal loopholes, etc. These and many other calamities, which most citizens now seem to have forgotten, were our daily fare during that dark period.

However, in spite of these overwhelmingly negative factors we still thought that the Government could amend its course if the results of the Parliamentary elections in March were adverse. This was not so, although it did not obtain a majority. In spite of everything it managed to increase its votes thanks to the electoral fraud, proved later, and which undoubtedly strengthened it.

The Commander-in-Chief returned to his professional functions on March 27th, after the elections. He left the Ministry of Interior and I returned to my post as Chief of the General Staff. The events I observed in the months during which I replaced the Commander-in-Chief left me in no doubt that Chile was rushing headlong towards an abyss, and that the forces which supported the Government were driving it to a civil war.

It was necessary, therefore, to speed the planning which up to now had been carried out without the urgency which we faced now. One of the most serious obstacles which the planning officers had to surmount was how to take the General Instruction documents from the Staff Office in the War Academy to the General Headquarters of the operative units so that these should, in turn, issue the corresponding instructions and proceed to the enlisting of troops without arising suspicion.

The procedure followed was almost overt because the work already prepared as directives for the War Academy was drafted as instructions of the General Staff for the preparation of an "Interior Security" war game. It was also arranged that the executive documents —orders and instructions— would be drafted by that body and thus sent to the units ready to be carried out. Two officers chosen for their absolute loyalty took part in this work. They were given the academic documents for the apparent purpose of studying and writing on the specified subjects. One of them received the subjects related to Operations and the other those concerning Telecommunications. Every document would be signed by the "acting Commander-in-Chief", and later, as Chief of the General Staff, they would be signed "by order of the Commander-in-Chief".

At the end of April, General Prats passed on to me again the command of the Army before travelling to the Soviet Union accompanied by a group of Generals and other officers. He intended previously to visit some other countries. While he was away I held some meetings with the Directors of Intelligence and Operations Departments to improve or check on what they were preparing.

The trip of our Commander-in-Chief was the result of an invitation by the Soviet Government which wanted to materialize and examine a plan for the purchase of war material, and the party included some officers who

were to act as advisers in the analysis of the war material. I managed to include some officers who were against the purchase plan in spite of the generous economic terms stressed by President Allende as previously mentioned. It was really an attractive but dangerous proposal because it left us tied to the Soviets, and to their instructors who, almost certainly, would not only teach us the use of the new material but also Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Moreover, the supply of spare parts could be easily cut off, should we react against their system, a situation which had already occurred with other countries which had been left with worthless scrap.

The events in Rancagua

During the brief period when I was again in command of the Army I increased the revolutionary planning and hastened its preparation.

An extremist action in Rancagua obliged us to reinforce the military garrison of that city with troops from the Colchagua Regiment stationed in San Fernando and to appoint an officer to coordinate both units. To do this I sent a Colonel from Santiago as a means of protecting the local command from the merciless campaign which was being waged against it. At the same time the "Rancagua" radio station was taken over by the wives of miners of "El Teniente".

The strike of the miners of El Teniente began in Rancagua on April 19th. A state of emergency for the whole of the Province of O'Higgins was decreed on May 10th and Lieutenant Colonel Christian Ackerknecht was appointed head of the emergency zone. After several days of intense unrest shots were fired from the Socialist Party Headquarters which left six people wounded, three students and three miners. Lieutenant Colonel Ackerknecht ordered a raid on the building where he found numerous weapons and Molotov bombs.

The Government reacted immediately: everything that had happened was misrepresented and a virulent campaign against the head of the emergency zone was started. In view of this situation I decided to increase the forces in the Rancagua garrison and, as I said, put a Colonel in command. As I foresaw the reaction of the military I gave my public backing to Lieutenant Colonel Ackerknecht. If my move was not understood then, I think that today, with a better perspective, it will be seen that it had favourable effects because Lieutenant Colonel Ackerknecht was left free from the attacks of the red press. On May 25th there was a harsh confrontation between the unions on strike and the police which left more than 15 casualties. Only the appearance of Army forces calmed the spirits and normalized the situation.

The Rancagua radio station was occupied on May 22nd. This incident had angered the Intendant of O'Higgins and Allende very much. They had tried by every possible means to force the ladies to leave the radio station.

On Sunday the 27th of May, President Allende called me early in the morning on the private telephone of his residence in Tomás Moro. He wished to talk to me urgently, but as on every Sunday I used to practice jogging I was only able to contact him at about 11 a.m. The first information he gave me was that "there were serious riots in Rancagua". I replied that the Commander of the Garrison had not reported any unusual situation, but that I would be able to give him an answer in a few moments.

When he cut off I phoned Rancagua and was informed by the head of the zone that there were no incidents of disorders of any sort. The radio station continued in the hands of the miners' wives, but it did not mean that there were riots.

As soon as I received this information I relayed it to President Allende who thanked me. However two hours later he called me again to tell me that there were incidents and assured me that the Intendant had informed him that "the situation was serious".

I tried to calm him but to no avail. He phoned me five more times that afternoon; he told me that the head of the emergency zone pretended to see nothing amiss and favoured the strikers. In the end he said that it was necessary to evict the ladies from the radio station as that place was the focus of the disturbances. Faced with such a sensitive order, I told him that evicting the women from the premises could easily turn into a bloody incident. As he insisted, I replied that an order of that nature from the Government should be given in writing, to which he said nothing. Later I decided to visit Rancagua personally, and went there in the car of the Commander in Chief alone without my driver.

When I arrived at the Regiment I found the Colonel in charge of the troops in bed with a strong flu. I then asked Lieutenant Colonel Ackerknecht to accompany me in a round through the city. We visited different places of the city and I was able to ascertain that everything was quiet. About 10 p.m. I went to Radio Rancagua where the miners wives were. I talked with some of them from across the main door. I think my words gave them confidence and hope. When I said good bye I told them nobody would hurt them and that they could be sure that the Army would not disturb them.

How I wished I could have told them that I was pleased with their attitude, that I congratulated them and gave them my full support, because I considered them remarkably brave as their behaviour proved. But an indiscreet word could spoil all our plans. However, something must have been inferred from my words because next day an evening newspaper published in its columns, possibly only to inform, but ignoring the damage it was causing and which could be fatal, the following:

"General Pinochet visited women on strike"

The very headlines were a problem for me. The text read:

"The strike of El Teniente still continued in Rancagua without alteration at 1 p.m. today, and there is no reason for this situation to change. The workers have categorically rejected the order to resume work and they are ready to take serious measures in case the interveners, in accordance with their powers, should proceed to cancel their work contracts and replace them by inexperienced people".

"In the meantime, the attitude of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Augusto Pinochet, who paid last night an unexpected visit to the women occupying radio Rancagua, was commented in a lively manner. The distinguished officer talked cordially with them and discussed with deep interest their heroic situation. They repeated to General Pinochet that "they would remain in the station at all cost".

All this was true but absolutely inconvenient at that moment. I cannot understand why it did not cause a reaction in the Government. It then continued:

"The strikers were also very disturbed to learn that the 33 socialist who had been detained as a result of the cowardly shooting of the students from the headquarters of that political party on Wednesday last week had been set free due to lack of evidence by order of the President of the Court of Appeals, Eduardo Araya".

"The comments about this situation, which do not imply a criticism of the Judiciary, lead us to think that the socialists not only managed to remove the head of the emergency zone but also have a license to kill".

"As a macabre detail we may add the arms found in their posession remain in the respective court. Not even the new Law of Arms Control has been applied against them".

That information so inconvenient at this moment could destroy all we were preparing. It compelled me, as a measure of common prudence, to send a denial to the newspaper signed by the Public Relations office of the Army. The next day the newspaper published the following:

"Regarding the information published on the first page yesterday on the visit paid by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army to the wives of the miners on strike who maintain the takeover of a radio station in that city, a denial appears to have been issued.

The said refutation has been amply publicized in the Popular Unity press with sordid political intentions. Though we, strangely enough, have

not received that explanations we make it to know to our readers. This declaration says: "In relation to the article published on the first page of "La Segunda" of today May 28th, the Department of Public Relations of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army informs the following:

1.—The visit of the Commander-in-Chief, Division General Augusto Pinochet to Rancagua on May 27th was made with the purpose of carrying out an inspection of the military forces assigned to that zone and in accordance with the duties of his high post.

2.—The local radio station was included among the places visited because it constituted one of the conflictive areas, but the acting Commander-in-Chief cannot accept that his presence in that place should be interpreted as supporting the persons occupying the station, nor that it should be used with political or other aims by the press.

3.—The acting Commander-in-Chief decided on this inspection using his exclusive prerogatives, and he will make them every time he deems it convenient when army forces under his command are involved. These activities, however, cannot be considered as supporting or rejecting the position of a certain union or any political stance.

"Public Relations Department of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief".

"Editors Note. As this denial obviously hints at names and mentions an article in this newspaper, especially in the curious interpretation of its point 2, we reproduce the sensitive paragraph which irritated the Commander-in-Chief". After transcribing the item in question, it adds:

"As the simple reading of the paragraph shows, there is not the least sign of misinterpretation of the visit of General Pinochet to those women, even less a "utilization with political aims". Any supposition is the product of an impressionable imagination and has been basely used by certain pro Government papers, the same ones which grossly insulted the Armed Forces and which did not deserve any direct refutation from the Public Relations Department of the Command in Chief. Perhaps it is because one of those newspapers is owned by the Ministry of Defense".

On May 28th during a meeting with the Army generals just before the return of General Prats, we again analysed the "General instructions on Interior Security of the Commander-in-Chief", and the High Command made the critique of the document. It was also stressed that in the face of any emergency it was fundamental that the Army should react as a whole to a single order and at a specified time.

The Government secretly continued to promote anarchy and subversion encouraging them from its lair. All those moments were trascendental for the future of Chile. We could not afford to make any mistake, be it in

the preparation of the operations or in their execution. Any error could be fatal not only for us but for the whole country. All the preparatory works were to be carried out with the utmost discretion. We continued employing the sectorial work system as I have explained before.

The Soviet Ambassador loses patience

A few days after he had assumed the Command of the Army, General Prats summoned us to a meeting of Generals. He informed us about his trip and then he asked if there were any comments. When asked if he had bought Soviet war material about which President Allende was so interested, he replied he had acquired only logistical elements, but not offensive nor defense weapons, as that required deeper study in view of the political consequences it could bring. During June, I could not help noticing how he was harassed by President Allende, Minister Tohá and the Soviet Ambassador; all three wanted to materialize as soon as possible a large-scale purchase of weapons. But the analysis and reports of the technical organisms were against the acquisition as it meant losing all the stock of war material we had in the country due to the very different characteristics of the Soviet equipment, and it also created a serious logistical problem.

On June 20th, when I was talking with General Prats he told me that the Soviet Ambassador had been so annoyed, that he went to the extreme of behaving rudely towards him because the purchase had been almost exclusively of logistic elements and the acquisition of weapons had been minimal. The Ambassador had angrily raised his voice to him, which Prats did not accept. His rudeness caused us great indignation and from then on many officers refused to accept any invitation to the Russian Embassy.

The outburst of General Prats

During the first fortnight of June we were living so tensely that it could be felt in the air. We could observe how upset our Commander was. He kept smoking one cigarrette after another and reacted with extreme violence towards his subordinates. The nervous breakdown came on June 27th when he was returning after lunch to the Ministry. He was driving his car along Avenida Costanera when somebody going in the same direction made an obscene gesture at him; he reacted violently taking out his gun and shooting at the other car. But the victim turned out to be a lady, who faced with such an unexpected reaction had an attack of nerves. General Prats stopped his car with the intention of giving an explanation but while the car was stopped a group of persons who had witnessed the incident insulted him and slashed the tires of his car.

After this sad incident General Prats went to La Moneda where he informed Allende of what had happened. Incredible as it may seem, the Government took advantage of the incident to spread all kinds of lies and, later, decreed a State of Emergency for the province of Santiago.

An unexpected "rehearsal"

Every day we received informations that our barracks were visited by people who were not members of the Armed Forces taking advantage of their friendship with some officer. In one case the Army Intelligence Service found out that a group of officers and civilians were conspiring against the Government and wanted to produce a coup d'Etat. This information was immediately transmitted to General Prats who reacted violently and threatened to take a series of measures. The main unit which could be involved was the Armoured Regiment N° 2.

It was the first sign of rebellion we could detect in the Army ranks but it was under control from the beginning. The conspirators were young officers of various units stationed in and around Santiago. As a first measure, the arrest of everybody involved was ordered, the group was detained and taken to the Military Court where the Office of the Military Prosecutor began proceedings immediately. Many of us were not surprised at what had happened with these young men given the almost unbearable climate of uncertainty and anguish in which the country was living and which was getting more serious every moment. The Commander-in-Chief ordered a sudden change of command in the armoured unit which was to take place on June 29th. But this change did not take place because, when the new commander arrived to take up his post, he found that the regular Commander, pressed by his officers, was going out into the street with an armoured unit to take over the Government Palace. It was thus that Armoured Regiment N° 2 rebelled against a superior order, and without waiting for any logistical support reached Avenida Bernardo O'Higgins.

I must state that I found this situation disconcerting, because it was carried out without any coordination, while we were still preparing our plans and had not made contact with any of the units in the rest of the country. This silly and isolated act could have well destroyed all we had prepared. However we soon appreciated its positive side: it was the best exploratory service we could dispose of those days to clarify, in the first place, the degree of discipline and hierarchy within the institution should it have to act against subversive elements. It also helped us to get a clear picture of the Marxist paramilitary forces which would act against our troops and lastly, that the reaction of the people and the support they would give to a call by President Allende to attack the Armed Forces was just a myth.

On Friday 29th June 1973, when the car taking me to the Ministry of Defense was crossing the Vitacura roundabout, the secretary of the Army General Staff called me on the car telephone to inform me that a group of soldiers from the Armoured Regiment N° 2 had reached Plaza Bulnes and that in those moments there was an exchange of fire from several directions. He therefore suggested that I take an alternative route to get to the Ministry.

In view of the situation I decided to go the Buin Regiment at once. I arrived when the troops were preparing to march on La Moneda.

Without even greeting the personnel, I took the command of the unit, and got on a jeep putting myself at the head of the column going in that direction. Nobody asked anything. In my vehicle was the Second Commander of the unit to whom I said:

> "This action of the Armoured Regiment is not controlled nor it is part of any plan; furthermore, it does not count with the support of the other units of the Santiago garrison. This entails great danger for these units if they are compelled to act against the Armoured Regiment. That is why in order to stop this uncoordinated action we must go to the core of the unit to dissuade our fellow officers, and we will only join them if they are attacked by the paramilitary forces or by groups of people called by Allende to do so. If this happens we will react violently against those people".

After I explained to him the likely reaction we would adopt in the face of that contingency, this chief told me:

> "General, the Buin Regiment is ready to do whatever you order".

At 11 a.m. the column went to the center of the unit and a first meeting point was fixed at the north side of Mapocho Station. When we arrived at that place, we left our vehicles and went to the corner of Teatinos and General Mackenna streets, opposite the Civilian Police Headquarters. I observed there how the plainclothesmen were running in all directions inside the building with guns, and protecting themselves behind the windows.

The unit which had formed on one side of the lorries started its advance in two columns through Teatinos Street to Plaza de la Constitución. I decided to go at the head of the unit next to an antitank gun. I stopped the march when we arrived to Compañía street and I ordered that two exploratory patrols be sent to Plaza Constitución. We then proceeded marching closely behind them.

When four privates of the Armoured unit were being detained in Huérfanos Street, a Captain of the Buin Regiment came to inform us that he had managed to talk with the Commander of the Armoured Regiment who told him that due to the lack of support the unit was returning with the tanks to its barracks.

As I had told the Second Commander of the Buin Regiment, there had been no coordination among the units of the garrison, the Armoured Regiment had acted on its own and was not followed by any other unit.

The Government called a great mass meeting in the Plaza de la Constitución that evening. President Allende spoke to the people and when he appeared on a balcony of La Moneda Palace he was accompanied by the Commanders-in-Chief of the three Armed Institutions. This caused a terrible impression on the majority of the members of the Armed Forces. Before General Prats went to La Moneda there had been a lengthy meeting of generals and admirals of all three branches of the Armed Forces where the Commander-in-Chief of the Army made a brief explanation before the High Command in which he deeply regretted the events of the morning and finished by saying that he had already ordered an inquiry to identify the guilty parties. He then left the room to go to La Moneda and asked me to chair the meeting in the meantime.

Before adjourning the session I declared the following to my fellow generals of the other services:

"Leaving aside all the negative aspects which have been mentioned here concerning the events of this morning, it is also interesting to point out some positive aspects which are very satisfactory. The extremists have shown their organization both in the central part of the city as in the outskirts, and our intelligence services have taken note of the weapons at their disposal. It has also been possible to confirm that the greatest asset that an armed force should have is its discipline, its training and its courage; this has been proved today and as soldiers this must fill us with pride".

I considered that I should not continue further; any slip could bring greater evils to those of us who had the responsibility to prepare the fall of the government.

In effect, this abortive attempt was an excellent exploratory action for the commanders of the troops which fate had provided, because of the information we obtained. The Marxists had shown their organization, their positions in the key buildings and the industrial "cordons" which enclosed the city. It was also possible thus to get information about their organization and how they would react when facing a similar situation. But, above all, what was most important for us was to discover that the agressiveness of

the people against the Armed Forces on which Allende and other members of the Popular Unity relied so much, did not exist. It was only propaganda and psychological action.

The majority of Chileans, made up of working and peaceful citizens, rejected what was happening in the country. That is why the defense of the Marxist policies remained in the hands of a minority of mercenaries and fanatics. Allende was aware of this situation, and that is why in his radio broadcast of that morning he said:

> "I call on the people to take over every industry, every business, to be alert, to come to the center of the city, but not to be massacred. The people must come out into the streets, but not to be machine gunned; they must do it prudently with any "element" they may have in their hands. If the time comes the people will have weapons".

Our analysis of the events of June 29th showed us we could not count on that armoured unit when the real moment to act came, because if we asked for their intervention, their logical answer would be that they were unwilling to repeat an action in which they might have casualties and be taken into court again. To overcome this delicate situation I decided, as Chief of Staff, to place in that unit two of my Adjutant Captains with outstanding leadership conditions and absolutely trustworthy.

The Tancazo of Tanquetazo, as the event of June 29th was called, delayed the preparation of the military action against Allende which would have allowed me to operate at the end of July. I had made plans for my wife and my youngest daughter to go abroad so that I should have more freedom to act, but now everything was delayed. My wife and children left for Panamá just the same as if nothing had happened.

After these experiences, the preparations for the revolution practically stopped. While we obtained more information it was necessary to make certain changes to the original plans and many matters had to be reviewed. For that reason it was only at the beginning of July and after talking with the Director of the War Academy that I considered that it was better to act openly in that institute so that a group of selected and reliable officers should carry out an "Internal Order appreciation". Moreover, to give an official character to the order I sent a written communication to the Director of the Academy asking him to carry out that study with personnel of the Academy. It was meant to prevent, with the help of the other services and the Police Corps, the action of extremist groups which tried to subvert the internal public order and stop the vital activities of the country, and was to be applied at a moment's notice, until normality could be reestablished. This study was primarily designed for the region of Santiago but could be extended later to the rest of the country.

I went to the Academy several times that month. I met the working group and talked with them about the difficult political situation the country was in. I made them realise that the Government was not unaware of the extremist activities, and told them our suspicions concerning the great quantity of arms that had entered clandestinely into the country, and about the possibility that the extremist actions could culminate in a massacre which would plunge the whole country into a bloodbath. During each of my lectures I could see that the student officers wished we would take a decision as soon as possible. We had to calm them down calling for prudence and telling them that any action we undertook could not risk failure because the operation we were preparing was of supreme importance for the life of the country. The most important thing before the final action was to have great faith and absolute discretion; any indiscreet word even to your best friend could be fatal not only for the group but for the country.

Shortly after the Tancazo, the extremists began an intense campaign to create turmoil. Many industries were taken over or intervened, the "cordons" in the external and central part of Santiago were increased, and a plan of psychological war was put into practice in the military housing estates so as to cause fear among the families of members of the Armed Forces and Police Corps. Thus, reports were spread of the atrocities that would be committed against their wives, children and parents. The threats continued and intensified through telephone calls at all hours, pamphlets, anonymous letters and messages, and so on. This psychological campaign did not scare the troops, but we did intensify the security measures in the military estates.

In view of this campaign I ordered on July 20th, under my own responsibility, that Army members should keep weapons in their houses. For the first time in several decades this authorization was given to all Army personnel. However, considering the sensitive nature of this measure, maximum precautions were taken.

Another of the experiences of June 29th was the presence of snipers hidden behind parapets in windows and terraces of the buildings facing the National Defense Ministry or La Moneda, from where they shot against the windows of our offices and then disappeared moving over to other sectors of the same building to continue shooting. As a way of neutralizing this threat, I ordered that in such an event we should have expert shooters who would return the fire. This was another instance of the way I was correcting the "Defense Plan of the General Staff" after the events of June 29th.

The relevant instructions for the defense of a building said that each officer, non-commissioned officer, class or soldier was responsible for the defense of the dependency in his charge, and for that he should have a SIG rifle with a telescopic sight and 300 rounds of ammunition.

As there was the possibility that they could occupy the elevators isolating all the personnel of the General Staff, it was ordained that, in case of an emergency, elevators would be operated only by members of the guard and under the express orders of the officer on duty who was in command. Guards would be permanently armed.

The civilian and female personnel who worked in offices of the General Staff would gather in the basement of the Guard Company of the Ministry of Defense where they would wait for orders.

Another important matter was the training of the personnel in case they had to act when attacked by extremists. It was decided that the personnel who formed part of the defensive groups should rehearse combat actions in a coordinated manner, should practice target shooting once or twice a week together and continually carry out exercises in simulated attacks.

The murder of Captain Araya

During July we received numerous reports about caches of weapons and armed groups. With this information we carried out military operations in different parts of the country, as a result of which we discovered stocks of weapons and explosives which in many cases had been transported in vehicles belonging to Government organizations. In the meantime the occupation of industries and private businesses continued, and the Christian Democratic Party agreed to the dialogue proposed by President Allende. All these facts characterize a period during which, while Allende tried to parley with the Christian Democrats, his supporters shouted slogans against the civil war and at the same time armed themselves to be ready to face a bloody outcome of the situation in which we were living.

The incident which impressed us most was the murder of the Naval aide-de-camp to the President. I remember that day we had attended a cocktail in the Cuban Embassy to celebrate the anniversary of the "July 26th Movement". The Commander-in-Chief had asked me to represent him on that occasion. While I was there Allende arrived accompanied by the Naval aide-de-camp, Captain Arturo Araya. After the protocolary greetings I stayed for a few minutes and left as soon as I could. It was the last time I saw Captain Araya alive. I was told later that a tense conversation had taken place between Allende and his aide-de-camp, as a result of which Captain Araya had asked permission to leave. He had gone out of the Embassy and went immediately to his house.

When he was in his house, he heard a strong explosion in the street. He opened the door of a balcony on the street to see what was happening, and at that moment he was shot down by a burst of machine gun fire. He was taken to hospital seriously injured where he died. The Government

immediately took advantage of this situation through its press services and the Civilian Police department, unleashing a wave of arrests and spreading slanders and falsehoods through the media. The Army Intelligence Service informed me that they had detected the probable involvement of three Cubans in the murder. However in spite of all the false declarations of the Government saying the murderer would be found and delivered to justice, the matter was soon put aside. This painful incident became just another episode in the thousand days of Allende's misgovernment.

Truck drivers paralyze the country

Those same days the truck drivers again stopped their vehicles and private transport came to a halt. The country was practically immobilized. Thus the Government consumed its energies, facing increasingly frequent setbacks in every sector. On the other hand the announced dialogue between the Popular Unity and the Christian Democratic Party did not reach any agreement; when they did manage to get together, the conversations proved fruitless and each side blamed the other for not giving in. Moreover, it was well known that if the Popular Unity gave in, it was for tactical reasons, as Marxists would say, and not to look for a solution.

The outcome of this situation was imminent and the government appeared to realise it, which is why it believed it was necessary to press matters. It was, in my view, its biggest mistake because this country has never been a nation of slaves and although its reactions are sometimes slow, when pressed by danger these become aggressive and violent.

The truck drivers' strike continued and the Government found no better solution than to proceed to the illegal requisition of cargo and passenger vehicles, which was carried out in many parts of the country. In this illegal action there were even attempts against the drivers' lives but, curiously enough, nobody spoke about human rights or solidarity, nor there were groups or organizations which denounced abroad the abuses committed in Chile. Perhaps because the victims of these violent acts were not Socialists or Marxists, they did not attract the interest of any foreign "inspector".

The Cuban "Presence"

Tension grew daily. The psychological campaign of the extremists against the Armed Forces showed two contradictory aspects: on one side they threatened us while on the other they tried to attract the members of the services through flattery.

The country was almost completely paralyzed. The political and social conflict had touched bottom. The country seemed to be on the brink of a civil war.

On the other hand the Navy had just detected a subversive movement in two ships of the fleet, the "Almirante Latorre", and the "Blanco Encalada", which was receiving support from the outside. With this specific intelligence a judicial investigation was begun by the Navy. While this happened national agitation increased. Terrorist groups carried out bomb attacks in the residential areas of Santiago and in different cities.

Chile faced the alternative of choosing between maintaining the freedom which it had enjoyed since Independence as a sovereign nation or becoming serfs as a satellite of Russia. We were being led in this direction by the conceit of one man who used for his own benefit the naïvety of a considerable number of Chileans.

Sectors of the Popular Unity had great confidence in their paramilitary forces, in the arsenals distributed through the city, in the peripheral groups and in the penetration of their ideologists in the armed institutions and other organizations which they had infiltrated. They were not able to realise the danger hanging over their heads, given the extreme discontent and unrest throughout the country. Allende did not lose the opportunity to appear as the man concerned about national harmony, but everything seemed to show that he, in his own heart, wanted a civil war. In public he talked about peace but in private he prepared for the war by personally training in the use of firearms. It seemed as if he wanted to pass into history as the Fidel Castro of South America. However he failed to take into account that Chile was not Cuba and that Chileans were not Cubans.

Allende formed a new cabinet which he called "Cabinet of National Salvation" appointing as Ministers the three Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the General Director of the Police Corps. In this way he intended to control and leave the Armed Forces without their leaders.

On August 8th I received an invitation from the Office of the Presidency to attend the swearing in of the new Ministers which would take place next day.

On that occasion, Undersecretary Daniel Vergara with that typical "charm" of his, read aloud one by one the decrees appointing the new Ministers. The General Director of the Police Corps, José María Sepúlveda Galindo, was appointed Minister of Land and Colonization; Air Force General César Ruiz Danyau, became Minister of Public Works, Admiral Raúl Montero Cornejo took over the Ministry of Finance and Army General Carlos Prats González, the Ministry of National Defense.

During the whole ceremony I kept on thinking how fate had put me again in a favourable position to save my country from Marxism, by being left once again in command of the Army. Allende gave a speech full of warnings about the danger threatening Chile and the possibility of a civil war. He repeated a sentence which seems to have come from his subconscious, and which held an obsessive and sinister thought: "this is the last

chance". But more than a last chance it seemed to be a pretext to gain time while his civilian followers and paramilitary forces continued with their preparations. We well knew that that was the other alternative of the Popular Unity to implant Communism in Chile, even if it meant a bloodbath.

The country was paralyzed with the national strike decreed by the CUT —the Confederation of Labor— "to show its resolve to prevent any attempt at a coup". They now spoke openly and without any scruple of a "People's Army", of arming the populace, of doing a "Djakarta" with executions in the residential areas, they even asked for the resignations of those commanders of the Armed Forces who did not accept the intromission of the Christian Democrats. The Law School of the University of Chile was occupied by ultra left-wing extremists and was an armed bastion connected to the industrial "cordon" Mapocho-Cordillera. Moreover, the shanty towns and the cordons which surrounded the city, enclosing it, made us think of the danger of a massacre which they could start at any moment. With deep concern I saw how pamphlets were distributed carrying various slogans destined to pressure the troops psychologically. It was proved that vehicles bearing number plates of international organizations distributed these pamphlets. To the increasing number of seizures of farms and urban properties, we had to add to our calamities the suspicious presence in Chile of two Cubans, Vice Prime Minister Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and the infamous Chief of the Cuban Secret Police, Commander Piñeiro. All these events were extremely disturbing and obliged us to hasten the rescue operation.

Fortunately I would be replacing the regular Commander-in-Chief with full command of the Army. That coincided with the fact that the planning was very advanced. If extremists thought the moment of confrontation was coming I thought so too. They wanted victory to take absolute power and bury their oponents for life in jails and concentration camps, while we only wanted to save Chile from Communism.

I also thought that the increase in Marxist violence could well be directed towards creating a prior state of psychological warfare in orden to inhibit those who could oppose them. For months, since they had assumed power in 1970, we had been overwhelmed with the flattery they had lavished on us. Now they had made a complete *volte face* and the Armed Forces were the target of the slanders and falsehoods coming from the MAPU, MIR, Christian Left and others. In Congress, we senior generals were the objects of the rudeness and scorn of some leaders of the Popular Unity who wanted by every conceivable means to produce a division among the members of the armed services, stressing differences of hierarchical orden to create a breach of discipline. They also tried to put one branch of the Armed Forces against the other, making us believe that they mutually despised each other.

During those days of growing anguish, and even though I realized that the time to act had come, one fact made me hold back. The Army was under my command but the order to proceed might be disobeyed because Allende had appointed the regular Commander-in-Chief as Minister of Defense and the two strongest units in Santiago remained under the command of men of his absolute trust. Therefore, an act of disobedience could lead us to a fratricidal struggle with the million dead about which the Communist talked. A thousand thoughts crossed my mind during those long nights looking for a way to prevent the useless slaughter of a civil war. Without the presence of those three Generals everything could be solved. Thus there was no other solution but to look for a way to send them away somewhere and proceed before it was too late. It was a hard decision, but the need to act firmly, come what may, to produce a decision was inevitable, not only because of the pressure of the majority of the people who incited us to act, but also because of the increasingly threatening measures that the Marxists were taking.

The Commander-in-Chief was the main obstacle we had to face as he was totally pro Allende. We had to bear in mind that the command structure of the institution is one of absolute respect for hierarchy which made it very difficult to disobey the Commander-in-Chief, and so we feared that many units in Santiago and the provinces would not carry out an order from an officer of lower rank. If the discipline of the Army were broken, it would, no doubt, lead to a fight among ourselves. For that reason it was imperative to solve that obstacle at any price. I therefore decided to hasten the final plans, and for this I held a meeting with the group of officers of the War Academy who was preparing the military operation.

My wife and daughter Jacqueline returned from Panamá that week. Time had gone by and I had not been able to take the decision to act due to the obstacles already mentioned.

A kind of Court

An event which took place one night, forced me to act with even greater caution. It was a Wednesday and I had gone to the Academy that day to talk with the group of officers and solve some details in our plans to intervene against the Government. I had lunch there and stayed in that place until about 3.00 p.m. I spent the rest of the day in the Ministry of Defense and went home at the usual time. I was sleeping when about 3.30 a.m. I received an urgent call from Allende asking me to go immediately to his house in Tomás Moro street. My first thought was that somebody had betrayed the group of officers, and that, no doubt, my life was now in danger. It was fate which drove us and I had to face its consequences in the best possible way. I dressed quickly while thinking that if I did not go

I would be confirming suspicions, and that if I went it could mean my death. I also believed that it was unlikely that anyone from our group would be saved, because my arrest possibly meant that the betrayal had been total and would bring about the arrest of all the others.

I thought of warning them but I stopped myself, realising that I would be accusing them and ran the risk of everybody being caught. The situation was complicated and very dangerous but perhaps the whole matter would come to light quickly, allowing someone in our group to take charge of the situation and face it.

I considered it was safer to take muy family to the house of my daughter Lucía. I woke up my wife and my two younger children who were deeply asleep. I asked them to get dressed because I had received an order to go out and they could not be left in the lonely house, so it was better that they should stay in the house of their sister about three blocks away. At about 4.30 a.m. I took my family to Lucía's residence. I bade them good bye as if I was not going to see them again but I kept calm. However, my youngest daughter had a kind of premonition and burst into tears which filled me with anguish at that moment. I had the feeling that my end had come. A car from the Civilian Police came to fetch me. I refused it, telling them that I would go in my own car. I drove my car and on the way the escort car kept besides me. I put a small pistol in my pocket.

I drove my car into the gardens of the presidential house. When I got out I noticed a great movement of people: I came across the Sub-Director of the Civilian Police, the communist Toro; near the main door I met Corvalán who was with Flores and Letelier. They led me to a hall and observed calmly while I handed in my service gun. I must say my anguish grew when I found the room was a real courtroom, set up as if a trial was about to start. Letelier asked me to sit on a sofa facing the public, where there were already some prominent Popular Unity characters sitting in chairs and armchairs facing the sofa where I sat. I kept my poise and my only thought was "it is the end". But many times I encouraged myself with these words: "Cheer up, Augusto, keep calm and take it easy".

I remained seated in the sofa that could be well called the bench of the accused, when a General came into the room. He was a fellow officer whom I had always trusted in spite of the comments of some people who pointed him out as a friend of Allende.

Allende had not yet come into the room. This was full and everybody had taken a seat. A few minutes later he came in through a side door. His appearance was spectacular. It was Mephistopheles entering to hell. He appeared in a way that I will not forget even though I should live to be a hundred years old. He was wearing a dark suit and had a Persian lambskin cap on his head. Over his clothes he wore a blue-black cape with a red lining and a great fur collar. I could well say that Satan had arrived at the meeting.

All present stood up to greet him which I also did. At that moment I could see that behind him was Coco Paredes, the sinister Director of the Civil Police department. His presence left me in no doubt that my end had come, but my mind repeated without stopping "Cheer up Augusto, keep calm".

After greeting everybody in general with a nod of his head, Allende addressed himself to me in particular and put to me a series of questions, mostly formalities, which covered several matters. I had studied his personal traits for a long time, and during my talks with him I had realised that he never put a question directly about something he was interested in knowing, but would bring up the subject incidentally within the context of a broader conversation. I had proof of this that night when he asked me about several general matters and among them what I was doing those days. I replied quickly to every one of his questions and when he referred to what I was doing I replied that some days were very hard due to excess work. I then felt that I should clarify the answer further and added that on that day I had been to the War Academy to learn about a security war game they were preparing and to which he was going to be specially invited. After this series of questions which lasted about thirty minutes, a general conversation ensued about the rightist terrorist acts carried out by the oligarchy opposed to the Government.

He then talked about the campaign of the middle class directed against him to prevent him from carrying out his plans to raise the standard of living of the people, and he immediately started talking about other matters to all of which I just listened without saying a word. He continued saying "the rich want to arouse the people against the Government in order to destroy the action which we are carrying out for their benefit". While he was talking I had the impression he was referring to another country and not to Chile, because he also pointed out how people had today attained many of their various aspirations. His words were sheer demagoguery.

After hearing his complaints, I told him the following in front of my fellow officer: "Mr President I want to understand your problems and uneasiness because I am also in favor of order, but I want you to know very clearly I am not General Rojo –a Spanish General against Franco– my duty as a soldier is to tranquillize the country and prevent disorder". His answer was decisive: "It is logical, General, I think so too". The other general kept silence.

Remembering today the events of that night I think that the key question he asked me amongst the number of subjects he brought up was the one about my activity of that day; the others had meant nothing and they had been put to see if there was anything doubtful. I think that if I had not mentioned my visit to the Academy or if I had lied my fate would have been different.

During the whole questioning those present had kept silence, watching my reactions or perhaps expecting a slip-up. They started drinking whisky afterwards and continued talking among themselves. About 5.30 a.m. I was able to leave his private residence to go and calm my family and console my daughter who was still crying. When I went out I invited the other general to come with me in my car wich he accepted. We drove towards the old San Vicente Ferrer church at the end of Avenida Apoquindo. I stopped the car there in a lonely place and bluntly I told him: "You listened to what I said to Allende; now I ask you, are you General Rojo?" His answer was forthright: "No, you well know I am a soldier, and you know me well". "Thank you –I said–, you take a heavy weight off my mind". I always believed my friend the General, and that is why I still regret today what I did then, to have asked him that question which implied a shadow of doubt.

General Prats resigns

Months after September 1973, talking one day with a person who worked in the Intelligence Service of the opposition to Allende, he told me according to his sources, what I have just related and completed the picture as follows:

That night Allende was having dinner with several Popular Unity personalities in his house when Altamirano phoned him to tell him "I have just been informed that Pinochet is conspiring. He was in the War Academy today and had meetings with some officers". Allende replied: "I shall check". It was then that he called me and informed those who were with him of what had happened. He foresaw what could happen in his house and that is why I think he called the other General, so that in case the accusation against me was proved true, he would take command of the Army at once.

After I left, Allende called General Prats, the Minister of Defense, and told him that he had suspected that I was conspiring. Prats answered him: "It is very difficult or, to put it better, impossible, Mr President; if something like that were happening, I would have been informed at once. I have people who are absolutely loyal to me in the High Command and they would have informed me if there was anything that serious". With this Allende relaxed and later phoned Altamirano telling him: "You were wrong; Pinochet is an old man who only thinks about military matters; that man could not even deceive his wife". That put an end to suspicion.

Since that day, I spent countless nights wondering how to carry out our plans without provoking a civil war. I would analyse the situation we were living in and usually my meditations left me more optimistic. However the military situation was getting more difficult every day. There was a notorious aversion towards the Commander-in-Chief, who as Minister of Defense, was being pressed by the people to tender his resignation. There

were phone calls to his home or to his office and anonymous letters every day. This rejection reached its peak when the wives of the Army officers turned up at his house to ask him to resign. He reacted by calling for police protection, which was a mistake, because police forces came at once to disperse the crowd by using tear gas bombs and a water cannon. That was the straw that broke the camel's back and on that day General Prats had the most serious nervous crisis I had ever seen him in. On August 23rd he tendered his resignation to Allende.

CHAPTER IV
Commander-in-Chief of the Army

That same day, August 23rd 1973 at 17.00 hrs I was called to La Moneda. I went there and we met in a small room called "Diego Portales", next to the office of the President. Allende and General Prats were waiting for me there, holding a lively talk.

After the proper greetings General Prats spoke saying: "President, General Pinochet is next after me in seniority, and during these years he has held the post Commander of the Santiago Garrison, Chief of the General Staff and has replaced me as acting Commander-in-Chief", Allende replied "Yes, I know", and began commenting, among other matters, the breakdown of his Government as a result of the lack of support from the Christian Democratic Party whose aim was to join the Government so as to regain power, a thing which he could not accept. After that he made a brief remark about the clashes between civilians and military men in Concepción and on the constant pressure of the middle class to provoke the Army to a "coup", and finished saying: "General, I think you are the man who must succeed General Prats". Before such an unexpected appointment I had the hunch that it was better not to show too much interest and that is why I replied: "Mr President I thank you very much but I think General Prats should continued in his post"; to which he answered: "The General is very tired and has to recover, later on we will give him another post". "I thank you, Mr President, but in these times it is essential to have full powers of command in the Army". His answer was: "Of course, General you have them".

After his opening words, General Carlos Prats had remained silent during the rest of the interview. After Allende had appointed me to suceed him he told me that the decree would be drafted immediately.

I have thought many times why I was chosen by Allende as Commander-in-Chief when he could count on others who were his friends. He must have known that I had always opposed communists and even himself when I did not allow him to visit the deportees in Pisagua in 1947 when I was head Captain of the deportees camp in that port. It is fate. No doubt he thought he could easily handle me. On my return to my office I wrote down in my notebook: "I have been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army. I believe the Divine Providence will help me on my way".

The decree bearing my appointment was quickly drafted and signed and in the following 24 hours many important things happened which were trascendental for the action which would take place a few days later. The events followed a chain reaction because when the resignation of General Prats became known I held a meeting with the Army Generals requesting their cooperation and understanding. The high ranking officers proceeded to hand me their resignations, which they could do having served more than thirty years. I kept these in a safe but thinking always that I would reject them later. However, at the time, it was an agreement which would help me to defend them against the intentions of the President. Only two Generals had not attended the meeting nor sent any excuse. On the contrary I was informed that one of them had handed over his resignation to his Chief of Staff.

When I went to see Allende that afternoon I told him that the two Commanders of troops of the Santiago Garrison, without asking permission from the new Commander-in-Chief nor waiting for the appointment of a replacement, had handed over their posts and gone home, and later had sent their applications for their voluntary retirement from the Army. This unprecedented fact relieved my worries of so many nights.

The unusual attitude of these two Generals, which was contrary to the most elementary principles of discipline, proved to be a new help from fate, because afterwards it allowed me categorically to reject the insistence of Allende that I reinstate these two officers as Commanders of the Operative units. I was with some generals in my office when Allende phoned me. He called to tell me that it was not possible to let two officers of such high professional qualifications depart; I simply answered that they had given a bad example, and that to tolerate such behaviour meant going against disciplinary principles, especially in times so difficult as the ones in which we were living. Allende continued, asking me the names of the Generals who would replace them. I mentioned two names which seemed to calm him as he considered them strictly military and professional men.

This stroke of luck allowed me to place two of my best friends in posts of my absolute confidence. That same day I ordered one of them to assume at once the Command of the Santiago Garrison and of the Second Division of the Army, and to the other I gave the order to take Command of the Military Institutes. With these measures the road ahead was left clear for action.

As a way to strengthen my refusal to reincorporate the two generals I published a brief explanation about their retirements in the press which said:

> "By decree N° 263 of the Office of the Undersecretary of War dated August 24th 1973, the absolute retirement from the Army of Brigadier Generals Mario Sepúlveda Squella and Guillermo Pickering Vásquez was approved".
>
> "Due to the reasons given by the parties concerned, there is no possibility of their reincorporation either by resolution of the President or of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army".

I remember that on that occasion, Allende talked to me about some politicians who were making contact with seniors officers of the Armed Forces. He named among them several generals, and stressed four names. I kept silence because I knew it was so. I never wanted to make contact with them before, because I knew that they were perfectly identified and if I had socialized with them I would have been also reported.

Between August 24th an September 5th, Allende called me every day between 11.30 and 12.30 at night. He waited for me in the Great Hall and we spent there about an hour during which he talked about the goals of his government, the lack of understanding of the rich, about anguish, poverty and other subjects. I listened to him patiently and then I withdrew. When I returned home my wife used to ask me if I had been offered something to drink; she would calm down when I answered her in the negative, but added very upset: "Don't drink anything, that man can give you a drug as he is capable of anything".

The second time we were walking through the hall something happened which did not please Allende. It was when he started to talk about a conspiracy against the Government in which four generals were taking part. My immediate reaction was that I could not pressure anyone to retire; he had told me previously that they were in contact with politicians, now it was a conspiracy. The facts were as follows: on Friday 24th he called me at 11.30 a.m. and after the usual brainwashing he remarked unexpectedly: "General it is necessary to call to retirement immediately Generals Torres, Bonilla, Carrasco and Arellano because they have behaved disconsiderately towards the workers" (he meant Torres and Carrasco) "and also, as I told you yesterday, they have met to conspire with Christian Democratic politicians" (he explained that these were Bonilla and Arellano). They had

both been aides-de-camp of President Frei. I remember waiting a few seconds before answering him:

> "Mr President, it would cost me nothing to do what you are asking me because I have the resignations of all the generals (there were two missing but I did not mention it) in my safe, but if I did, I would immediately forfeit my position as a man of honour, because such a measure would mean to the eyes of the whole Army, that I had accepted my appointment from you, so that, in turn, I should reciprocate by giving course to the resignations you are requesting of me. I am sorry, Mr President, but I cannot accept that on no account. Moreover you told me that I would have ample powers in the Command of the Army, as I have shown it with the measure applied to the two generals. And you confirmed it when you appointed me to the post".

I noticed, as I said before, that he did not like my answer, but at that moment he only managed to tell me: "Of course, General, you have full powers to do so" and did not insist any longer. However the Undersecretary of the Interior Daniel Vergara would call the Undersecretary of War, Colonel (Ret.) Valenzuela, every day asking him to convince me to give course to the resignations of the four generals. He, invariably, received a negative answer to his request, but after two or three days and in view of his insistence I was forced to give him a fairly harsh or even rude reply. After that he did not insist any longer.

There was a sort of heavenly light which brightened those dark days. Every problem was cleared up or solved in a normal, clean way and even those events which at first seemed negative had a favourable ending. Today when I look back at the road travelled I think how Providence, without forcing events, was clearing the obstacles in the way to facilitate the final action with which we would put an end to the Government of the Popular Unity.

I also wish to clarify that it is not my intention to tarnish the good name of the generals who left the Army on August 24th. Their behaviour was due to the blind obedience they thought they owed the Government. Today, I consider that, by acting as they did, they were only fulfilling the designs of fate in which the hand of Providence acts in the most unexpected ways. I know many do not see things this way, and even more they make fun of it, but beliefs strengthen actions.

"...Until the integral and total recovery of the country"

By the last days of August the situation was unbearable. We had reached the limits of tension. On August 27th the Department of Operations handed me an extensive Memorandum on the national and institutional situation. I was quite alarming:

"Political extremes hold unreconcilable positions. They seek to polarize around them the great mass of people of middle-of-the-road views, demanding a political definition from everybody".

Another part of this document stated: "The solution proposed by the present government has not given satisfaction to the aspirations of a considerable majority of the population"; and then continued: "The middle class has been attacked economically because it constitutes the major obstacle which prevents attaining the dictatorship of the proletariat".

The study declared: "Both the working classes and the ruling class are essential and equally important for the production of goods and services. It is considered a fatal mistake to give greater importance to one class over the other in the development of the country, because in that way, apart from diving the Chileans, it encourages the armed struggle between these social classes as a result of the hatred engendered".

"Respect for human life has been lost. There is killing without any fear or scruple, nor is private property respected".

"The working class has been politically organized, it has been trained for armed struggle and has been made aware of its strength. It has been encouraged to do so by a small group of political theorists of totalitarian ideologies".

"For quite some time there has been a wave of attacks against persons and public utility services. Terrorism has quickly increased and its action escapes the control of the authority. To this we must add something more serious: the fact that the Government shows no signs of wishing to put an end to the drastic chaos and the extremism which is evident in all its organizations. The longed-for and expected peace does not come from the Government or its followers; on the contrary it has used the international tactics of encouraging hatred among persons and social classes similar to the ones used in East Germany, Korea and Vietnam. Add to the above the strong external support to extremist groups both in men and in war material. Enormous quantities of light and semi-heavy weapons have been introduced into the country, together with the necessary funds for their terrorist activities. The number of foreign extremists acting in Chile has reached incalculable limits posing a serious threat to the country, its people and the constituted order".

The same document referred to student youth observing that "the young students are completely politicized, and they will not hesitate a minute to use them profusely for their political aims. They have made them forget that their main duty is to study".

The analysis concluded as follows:

"a) The integrity and the joint action of the Armed Forces and the Police Corps are decisive for the future of the Nation, especially in this moment of crises of the economy and institutions and of the internal cohe-

sion of the country. Only a firm, unified and coordinated action of the three branches of the Armed Forces and the Police Corps can prevent a confrontation".

"b) The deterioration of the country is evident, and the Government has serious difficulties in keeping control of the Nation. As an alternative to the moment we are living, the Opposition proposes a coup d'Etat which would only mean a momentary break because soon we would be witnessing the same events that now affect us. We consider that the military action which will be carried out, should remain in power for a great number of years until the total and complete recovery of the country has been effected; otherwise it would only be a parenthesis between two negative governments for the Nation".

Preparations.

The last days of August our planning reached its final phase. When the team met we came to one of the most debated points: the battle of Santiago. The position of the shanty towns and the internal and external cordons formed a double enclosure. We reckoned that the action would take at least 10 days which had to be considered for the purpose of local supplies, health care and the number of men that were going to be needed.

As I have said before, as from Thursday August 23rd, I started on an extensive plan of visits, covering all the units of the Garrison of Santiago, San Bernardo, San Felipe, Los Andes, Quillota and Valparaíso. They would allow for the formation of two enclosures in Santiago. The first one protected the inner center and the second outer one, encompassed the shanty towns and popular housing estates.

In each of the Garrisons visited, I met with the officer corps and the permanent cadre of men to talk about institutional cohesion, discipline, hierarchy, the obedience of orders and the permanent state of readiness of the units in view of any emergency.

In more than one unit I asked the Commander or Director if he was willing to carry out any order that I, as Commander-in-Chief, might issue. In every case I received the full support from everyone. I noticed that nobody doubted any longer; everybody was waiting for the order to act.

As I had the problem of daily calls of Allende, I had to coordinate my visits in the mornings or afternoons after his call so as to be always present when he summoned me.

After the meetings with the troops I would stay to talk with the commander, officers and non-commisioned officers. From all, without exception, I received the most loyal support. Even now, I remember with emotion every one of them, and how much Chile owes them.

Events continued taking place in perfect order until August 29th, a date I remember with bitterness because we learnt that a group of extremists, which included among others a foreigner, had murdered Sub Lieutenant Héctor Lacrampette Calderón in cold blood and for no apparent reason. He was waiting for a bus to go back to the barracks, when he was offered a lift in a van, which he accepted. A few blocks later he was shot at point blank range. After undressing his body the murderers were about to throw him into the San Carlos Canal when by chance and mistake they were detained by civilian policemen (which had they known would have done nothing). When I informed Allende of this painful episode he told me "I have been already informed, but I was told they had found drug cigarettes in his pockets". I was indignant and about to call him a liar, but I kept my calm so as not to risk everything and merely replied: "How strange, Mr President, I had been told that the young man did not smoke". Allende kept silence and I left.

As I have already said, in the analysis of the situation it was established that the battle of Santiago would be a double siege. To face it was necessary to count upon two groups which had to act in a coordinated way, because one would start the combat and would form the first enclosure round the center of the city. Once the combat started, there was the possibility that the mobs of the cordon would attack these troops; that was the moment to employ the second group which would carry out the final enclosure leaving within those who were taking part in the first attack. This is easy to explain but complicated to execute. Not only did we have to prepare the two groups and separate them in time and space, but the previous preparation had to be made in absolute secrecy. We had to prevent any leakage which could alert the Government whose information service was very well organized. I had personal proof of this one night when, while I was having dinner with General Prats in the dinning-room of the Commander-in-Chief, Minister José Tohá arrived to say that there were reports of troop movement in Valdivia. I replied that it was a cavalry unit returning to its Garrison after some days of work outside the city. Tohá took the telephone, dialed a number, asked the same question and gave our telephone number. Five minutes later he received confirmation of the answer I had given. They had, without any doubt, a good intelligence service.

On September 5th, I went to the office of the Minister of Defense, Orlando Letelier, and told him that it was not possible to carry out the Preparatory Review of the Grand Parade with the full contingent of the troops. I added that only the forces of the Santiago Garrison would take part. When Letelier asked me the reasons for this I mentioned the lack of food supplies in Santiago for the units coming from outside and the need to save fuel of which we were short. The Minister accepted these reasons but told me to take measures so that troops from other Garrisons

should also come. Thus, on that occasion we had to take measures so that at least some men should come to Santiago from the surrounding Garrisons. The reason for leaving these forces outside the city was to be able to dispose of them later, and thus effect the double enclosure of the city.

The full contingent of troops would come only on the 19th, the day of the Grand Military Parade, but some of them would come before to reinforce those of the Garrison. That allowed me to fix September 14th as "D-Day". It was convenient to disguise the start of the operation because of the delays in the enlistement with delivery of ammunition, which takes upto 3 or 4 hours, and could easily allow any informer to sound the alarm. Now, under the cover of the Preparatory Parade, it could well pass unnoticed.

It is also necessary to remember that during August the body of Generals of the three Armed Forces met to discuss matters relating to the present state of the country. Their important conclusions were set down in a "Memorandum" which was sent to Allende for his information, but the President seemed to pay no attention to the suggestions of the High Command.

My daugther's birthday

We would all come out from those meetings thoughtful and rather pessimistc about our future. For my part I talked to nobody. The only person I used to talk to while going downstairs from the Ministry was with the Chief of the General Staff of National Defense, vice-Admiral Patricio Carvajal, to whom I expressed in private: "The meeting of the High Command was very interesting, Admiral, but you well know that this is not the solution of the Academy, the solution is one only and it is quite different", a phrase commonly used in the Academies when the answer given by the pupils on a subject does not coincide with the one espoused by the Direction of the Institute and which, obviously, is considered the best.

Admiral Carvajal came to my office on September 5th and 6th. He brought up any professional subject with a hint for me to ask him about the position of the Navy towards the Government. For my part I could not tell him what the Army was planning. However when I saw his uneasiness increasing I told him, "Admiral, for now we must wait". I think he understood me. I could not tell him that "D-Day is on the 14th", breaking the rigorous secrecy of the planning.

On September 7th the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force came to my office, but he did not specifically bring up any sensitive subject during our conversation either. I think that this was due to the presence of other generals. However, I noticed that he wanted to convey a message to me, but he did not do so and neither did I show any interest in hearing it.

I also received that day the Head of Operations of the General Staff who brought me the final orders and plans to be applied on September 14th. This distinguished Colonel brought me the executive documents all ready. After reading and signing them, I told him that those documents must be dispatched on Tuesday 11th by plane to the northern and southern Garrisons. He replied: "The orders will be sent off as you say, General". He did not ask nor showed concern about the urgency of sending the documents by air, nor why they had to be dispatched that day and not before.

On Saturday morning I went out shopping to town with my wife. We wanted to buy a present for my youngest daughter whose birthday was on the following day, September 9th. When we were returning we stopped at a food shop, "Establecimientos Oriente", to order two cakes for a tea which my wife intended to give to the Generals' wives on Tuesday the 11th. I considered daily life must be kept as normal as possible. I knew I was being permanently watched and any false step would have fatal consequences.

As I said Sunday 9th was a very special day. I was my youngest daughter's birthday and as usual almost the whole family came. We made all the usual preparations for the celebration of her birthday In the afternoon at tea time we had the visit of several friends who came for a specific reason: the birthday party of my daughter Jacqueline.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, General Gustavo Leigh, arrived also about that time. I took him into my study with the pretext of showing him a map I had bought recently. He could tell me there what he had not been able to before in my office.

After talking about some topics we dealt with the subject of his visit, he told me that if the four institutions acted together there would be no resistance to the overthrow of the Marxist Government; that a Governing Junta should be named, chaired by me as President in spite of the fact that he was two days my senior, to which I replied that his statement was mistaken because the Commanders-in-Chief represent their institutions in the following order: Army, Navy, Air Force. He accepted what I said, as it was not a time for discussions. After listening to his exposition I replied that the Army had no problems to act because it was ready to do so. We were talking about our decision when two senior naval officers arrived at my house sent by their Commander-in-Chief. My wife took them to my study where I was with General Leigh. After the greetings they told me that they brought a document from Admiral Merino, Head of the first Naval Zone.

The message was short but of enormous importance. If the Army had not been ready for the action of the 14th, I think the situation could have led to a failure with a division of forces which would have ended in what we

wanted so much to avoid: a civil war. It set out the gravity of the immediate situation, and requested the participation of the Army in a rebellion against the Government in two days time. Apparently the Navy seemed to have forgotten that the Army covers the entire country and that it is very difficult to keep their enlistment secret. Now, however, I realise better than I did that day, that in Valparaíso the Navy could hardly hold back and that if we did not accept what they were asking they would act on their own on the 11th, with all the problems which it would bring us, as the decision to anticipate events could spoil all our carefully prepared plans.

We came to the conclusion that if the Navy carried out this action alone it would be very dangerous, even if some units of the Army took part, because it would be enough for one military Garrison not to obey for there to be a risk of the Armed Forces dividing, which would lead to a fratricidal war. I considered that there was no other alternative but to accept the request of the Navy and bring the action forward three days, from September 14th to September 11th.

Once I had reread the communication of the Head of the First Naval Zone one of the naval officers asked me to sign it and handed me his pen; I refused telling him that, on this occasion, I would use my own and proceeded to sign it together with the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force. After the agreement was signed, I declared that the Army was ready for action on September 11th. I did not wish to tell them how complicated it was for me to hasten the events in the Army. It forced me to rush the orders and send them off on Monday 10th and not on Tuesday as programmed. I decided to take the matter into my own hands, I called the officer in charge of the Operations Department and reminded him of the orders given, which now were to be sent by plane to the north and south of the country on the morning of September 10th.

Later, I talked with the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force about the participation of his institution in the action of the 11th. The problems of that day would be practically the responsibility of the Army. That is why I told General Leigh I accepted his offer, the bombing of La Moneda in case of great resistance on the part of the Marxists, because I well knew that a quick and harsh action would bring a about decision sooner, and thus save many lives.

The Navy officers had kept silence up to that moment until one of them told me that the Fleet would sail out on September 10th to take part in the Operation Unitas but would be back in Valparaíso on Tuesday 11th, which it would make public the revolt of the Navy.

My greatest satisfaction was the way we had kept the operation secret, nothing had leaked out and when there had been suspicion Allende himself had made them vanish. Now that the number of participants had increased any indiscretion could neutralize what we had planned with so much care.

For this reason I took special care at the end of the meeting to stress to them that everything should continue normally and in utmost secrecy. Any indiscretion or leakage would not only cost us our lives but would lead to the failure of the whole operation. I insisted that if the government agents had the slightest clue, and they had an excellent espionage network, everything was lost. Thus, discretion was absolutely essential.

I invited the officers to have tea in my house but they preferred to leave. Everything continued under the guise of the most absolute tranquility. The birthday party of my daughter continued normally amidst members of the family and some friends as we had always done.

When I returned to the drawing-room somebody asked why so many visitors. I replied my daughter had received many presents that day. My calm exterior and the pleasant birthday party removed every suspicion. I think nobody could imagine that there, in that house, we had decided on a far-reaching event which would change the destiny of Chile. Within hours the future of the country would be at stake.

CHAPTER V
The Eve

After the guests had left I went to my study where I reviewed the latest events which came to complicate the plans already drawn up long ago.

To anticipate the action for the 11th, when it had been programmed for the 14th, involved a serious risk. However, although upset and worried about what was happening, I told myself that "you must not bend the hand of fate", and if at that moment Providence forced a change on me, by bringing the date forward, it must be for the best. Thus reassured, I went to rest.

Although my thoughts in the study had comforted me, I remember that I was unable to sleep that night. I stayed awake looking for solutions to the problem created by the change of date. If we had chosen September 14th as the day of the action it was because, under the cover of the Preparatory Review, a massive movement of men and the distribution of ammunition to the troops taking part in the parade, would not attract attention. Now if we carried out preparations and the delivery of ammunitions on the morning of the 11th or on the night of the 10th, it was quite possible that Marxists, who were surely infiltrated in our ranks, would detect that something abnormal was happening in the units. Then the paramilitary forces would take immediate steps to prevent our action and that would surely lead us to a bloody confrontation.

Therefore we had to look for a solution which did not alter the initial outline of our plan. Apart from the change of date, various doubts crept up

in my mind during the night and I needed to find a solution to these problems as soon as possible.

The first change in the plans was how the troops would attain the required level of preparation without awakening the suspicions of the Government and the Marxist political parties. We commanders well know that the distribution of ammunition, the preparation of heavy weapons, vehicles and so on, are always very visible and take plenty of time. Therefore it was necessary to find a cover which could serve as a pretext to prepare the units. Previous plans would not have alarmed the Government, but these could not be carried out now after we had agreed to anticipate the action. That change of date would leave us exposed in spite of all our precautions.

I also thought about how I could bring about the preparation of the units outside Santiago which had to be ready for combat in the capital and close the outer ring because it was almost certain that the Marxist-Leninists of the external cordons would surround the troops. To solve this situation I decided to alert those units through a secret message indicating the following steps in the preparation for the combat which should take place on the 11th, so that the forces would be prepared to go to the places of combat when ordered.

About 4.00 a.m. I was able to get some sleep, but without having found a pretext for the movements of the Santiago Garrison on Tuesday 11th. In spite of the numerous times I awoke and all I thought about the matter, I was unable to find a solution. On September 10th I got dressed feeling the full weight of such an important problem pending solution.

In spite of that worry it was necessary to act with the utmost naturalness, just as if it were another day. For that reason work had to be carried out normally, and the activities of the Commander-in-chief scheduled for that day were to be carried out as programmed.

And so things developed during that memorable morning. When I left my house for the Ministry my secret worry was still there: how to carry out the enlistment of troops without causing alarm.

Altamirano lends a hand

When I arrived at my office my anguish increased, but when I looked at the newspapers which I found on my desk, my heart filled with joy when I discovered, reading the headlines, the precise way to end with my uncertainty. The solution to the problem which had tormented me the whole night was there before my eyes. The headlines of the press announced that, at a mass meeting in Valparaíso, Carlos Altamirano, true to form, had launched a violent attack against the Navy, made threats and had tried to create unrest. His attitude coincided with a serious circumstance.

On Tuesday the Valparaíso Court of Appeals had to decide over his deprival of Congressional privilege, which if accepted could lead to riots which would affect internal security. Furthermore, those events could degenerate into a bloody action that could spread to the rest of the country.

After analysing all those possibilities I had to weigh them carefully and anticipate the preventive measures to avoid the resulting evils.

The solution to my problem was there. Once again Providence provided its generous assistance. The cover was perfect because nobody could object to our taking measures to protect public order. Such arrangements allowed us to disguise all the preparations of troops in and around Santiago.

When I remember this moment I must thank this gentleman who, with his violent behaviour helped us to carry out our mission. I thank God for having blinded him. Altamirano, the most rabid enemy of the Armed Forces had provided, through a trick of fate, the most unobjectionable solution to the worries of the High Command. The Army has to recognise his timely and valuable service which helped us so much.

Having finished reading the newspapers and after meditating briefly I went happily upstairs to the offices of the Minister of Defense on the fourth floor of the building. I went immediately into the office of Minister Orlando Letelier to whom I expressed the concern of the Army about the latest events and showed him the newspaper headlines, and said:

"This gentleman, who does nothing to solve the existing state of tension in the country, forces me to order the quartering of troops for tomorrow morning in view of possible disorders which could take place not only in Valparaíso but also in Santiago, as a result of the likely privation of his privileges as Senator of the Republic".

The Minister, after an acid comment on Altamirano, kept silence which I interpreted in the sense that he was now informed of the measure I had adopted. It was 10.15 A.M. of September 10th. I left his office at once and returned quietly to my office with the feeling of having an enormous weight taken off my shoulders. So it was, in effect, I must admit, but I gave no sign of my inner joy.

I now had the solution to my problem and in those moments it was necessary to take all the measures so that the Government should not retract itself. Consequently, everything had to follow its normal course. Thus the activities of that day were the usual ones and I showed no sign of worry. My last meeting that day was with a group of retired Generals who brought some problems. They presented their case and after listening to them attentively I promised to find a solution. Today, when I talk with some of them they tell me they had suspected nothing that morning. As more than one thought I would give them some sort of information, they left rather dissapointed. At midday I called my adjutant and asked him to make an appointment for 12 a.m. with Generals Bonilla, Brady, Benavides,

Arellano and Palacios, that is to say, the ones who the following day would command the different columns which would advance towards La Moneda.

In the meantime I called my wife and told her to go to Portillo that afternoon with the children and spend the night in Río Blanco, as the children had no school due to the teachers' strike and the disturbances which prevented them from attending classes normally. My wife prepared everything and left for Los Andes at 3.00 p.m. With this I relieved my concern about what could happen to them if the action of the following day was discovered. Up to now nobody knew my aims for next day, excepting the other Commanders-in-Chief.

That day I was informed of the decision of the Police Corps to join the other Armed Forces, giving assurances that they would not act against the troops when the attack on La Moneda started.

At the appointed time the five Generals turned up in my office. I locked the door and offered them seats. I went to the cabinet with the case where I kept a replica of the sword of O'Higgins, I took it and drew out the blade. I approached each of them in turn and putting the sword before them, made them solemnly swear as soldiers that everything that would be said in that room was to remain absolutely secret. Not even a hint was to escape their lips.

After taking their oaths, I told them formally:

"Generals, the political, moral and economic situation of the country has reached its lowest point, making the security of Chile untenable. Tomorrow, September 11th the future of the country is at stake. For this reason we will occupy La Moneda and throw out Allende and his accomplices from the Government. However, they will be given the opportunity to leave the country without harm, for which we will offer them a plane. If there is armed resistance, as we expect, we will fight toughly with all our means. I think, gentlemen, the action will be shorter if it is drastically applied and it will also contribute to save many lives". One of the Generals declared that time was too short to prepare orders to which I replied: "I hereby hand you the documents for the different groups for you to adapt them and carry them out as good soldiers".

"The groups will be commanded in conformity to the order established in these documents. However nobody must move nor do anything until tomorrow at 7.30. One false move could lead to failure. If resistance starts growing in La Moneda it will be bombed by the Air Force so as to prevent great losses of lives. In that case the troops will retire marking their most advanced line with a white cloth on their backs. Later, when the Air Force strike is over we will resume the attack in full strength. If tonight due to informers or suspicion I were to be murdered, the most senior General (and I indicated General Bonilla) will take over the command of the troops; if he falls the General who follows will assume and so on. Generals, this

resolution can not change, stop, waver or fail because the fate of Chile is at stake and our country is above our own lives". The preparations will be carried out during the night in accordance to conditions for a quartering operation. But, I repeat, nobody is authorised to move a man from any unit. We must work on this final stafe in the utmost secrecy and you are the only ones who know about it".

General Palacios who commanded the tank unit said that his main concern was the deficient condition of the artillery of those units which could not be used for lack of brake fluid in the guns. That deficiency created a serious problem for the Tank Batallion which had to be solved by dawn. To do it we employed one of the most primitive systems used by the Germans during the Second World War, the use of a lubricant similar to sewing-machine oil, which gave excellent results. We did not know if it existed here but thanks to the diligence of the members of that unit they found an oil distribution company where they bought the amount required to leave the artillery of the tanks in excellent conditions.

I also stressed that it was essential to avoid any kind of communication, be it by radio or telephone, about the subjects of our talk and especially about the preparations ordered, as the Marxists constantly intercepted our communications. I also forbade sending messengers with documents, for they could be discovered and fall into the hands of the enemy. I reminded them that we had kept our secret for months, but an indiscretion could make us lose everything in minutes. As regards the preparation of troops, I told them we would take advantage of the first degree quartering which would start at 6.30 a.m. of the 11th; therefore, all had to seem normal until that time.

At that meeting it was also mentioned that the fleet would sail that afternoon from Valparaíso creating a feeling of tranquility, but would return to port at dawn on September 11th, so as to take part in the operation in that zone. This was also considered as a good tactical distraction, for the Marxists would concentrate their main attention on the fleet, allowing us to complete our final preparations in the capital. Furthermore, I informed them that during the attack on La Moneda the Police Corps would withdraw its men on duty in that place, leaving the Army free to act against the paramilitary forces there.

After they were informed of the "Plan of Operations", there were a few questions which were duly cleared up. At the end of the meeting we parted with an embrace, in case we should not see each other again, conscious of the deep responsibility we were assuming before the country, its people and history. After this official farewell I invited the generals to have lunch with me in my Headquarters. I also invited General Leigh.

Lunch took place in an atmosphere of good comradeship. After the meal, I took leave of my fellow officers and summoned the General Secre-

tary of the Army, a trustworthy officer. He prepared the radio communiques to all the garrisons of the country. These radiograms would be dispatched in cypher and ordered "the immediate occupation of all the Provincial and Departamental Governments of the country" and the application of the agreed plans. Those documents would be issued simultaneously to all the garrisons of the country before 6.00 a.m. of the 11th. It was reckoned that they would be decoded before 7.30 a.m.

It was convenient to keep a semblance of normality, which is why the work in the High Command proceeded normally until 6.30 p.m. I met another group of Generals at 7.00 p.m., and after making them swear to their discretion as I had done in the morning, I told them what we were going to carry out, and assigned them their posts in the General Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief for the action of the following day. I also forbade them to give out any information about what we had talked of that day.

Just as in the morning, I received from these three Generals full backing and total support for the action. I immediately proceeded to appoint the most senior as Chief of Staff; the following one as Head of the Intelligence Service and the third one as Head of Operations. I told them about my worries and the necessity to act in the hardest possible way.

I met then General Oscar Bonilla and we started analysing the different zones of action. One of my great concerns was the area of Calama; according to our information there were various armed groups from nearby Chuquicamata, with good combat instruction. That led to the possibility that the Regiment in that city could be left isolated, giving time for the arrival of reinforcements from abroad as Fidel Castro had often promised to Allende during his visit to Chile.

If that supposition came true, the problem would be serious because it would allow the paramilitary forces to form a "valley head" between Chuquicamata and Calama with enough space to allow for reinforcements to arrive by air. Moreover, with all the Marxists moving to that place from other points of the country, they could form a unit which would serve as a basis for starting a resistance movement of untold consequences. To prevent this, I alerted the forces in Antofagasta. I also established other places where a similar situation could occur advised the nearest garrisons.

After the guidelines given to the Generals it was decided that at 7.30 a.m. of the 11th, the Command Post of the Commander-in-Chief would be set up near the Army Telecommunications Center to control and coordinate from there all the units and garrisons of the country. I made it clear to the Chief of Staff that if I did not arrive by that time he should assume the post and lead the military rebellion along the length of Chile.

I also insisted again on what I had said to the Generals that morning: "Everything must seem normal until tomorrow at 7.30 because any unexpected movement of troops would attract the attention of the Government; if they discover what we have planned we run the risk of failure, and most certainty it would be the start of a merciless civil war of unforeseeable consequences".

It was about 8.00 p.m. when we took leave in the same manner as we had done that morning with the other group of officers. Before leaving the Ministry a Staff Colonel came up and handed me a report with the points the proclamation of the following day would contain, which I approved.

Given the need to deceive the enemy it was necessary to keep everything normal and natural. For that reason when I arrived at my house I kept my car as I always did it and ordered my personal escort to go to have dinner. I then went out for a while and entertained myself playing with my dog as usual. I then walked along the street for about half and hour, I was interrupted in my stroll by the orderly who came to advise me that I had an urgent phone call. It was from the officer on duty of the Garrison to tell me he had been informed that a motorized unit was coming out from the Chacabuco tunnel and had stopped there. I was furious because the orders had not been obeyed. I presumed that some Commander had become nervous and that impetuosity could spoil all our carefully prepared plans which were already being put into practice. I decided to call directly the Commander of the column to which that unit belonged. I had realised quite some time ago that my telephone was tapped so I considered it was safer to talk on the car phone, the use of which, although as risky as the other, had the advantage that it would take them longer to grasp the meaning of the message. Thus I called the General responsible of the unit who answered that he did not know of any movement of troops; but I managed to stop other displacements by telling him: "Look General, you must understand that the Preparatory Parade is on the 14th, and so we can not bring units before then because of the supply problems of food we have in Santiago. I would not be able to feed them. Apart from that, as you well know, we have a shortage of fuel. I therefore repeat: Nobody coming for the Preparatory Parade may come before the fixed date. Do you understand?". I think he did because I did not learn of any other movement of units during the rest of the night.

About 11.30 p.m. I put out the lights and as every night stayed in my study which was always the last place with lights in my house. I did not change my habits and kept to all the usual movements.

The morning of September 11th

I must confess that night was the longest of my life. I could not close my eyes; my main concern was the fear of a possible information by someone infiltrated, or that the commander of a column should anticipate the displacement of his troops provoking the reaction of the paramilitary forces, whose trained brigades would act immediately and could even paralyze our movements barricading with heavy vehicles the roads leading to the city. I counted the minutes and seconds as the clock ticked away the time. At 5.30 I took a shower and started getting dressed; about 6.30 the telephone started ringing, it was a call from the telephonist of Allende's house. I answered it as if I was just awakening, I must have sounded convincing because I was only informed I would be called later. I dressed quickly. At 7.00 the vehicles appointed to take me to a review in Peñalolén arrived. Shortly after, at 7.10 I was going in the car to the house of one of my children. I stayed there some minutes contemplating my small grandchildren who slept soundly, knowing nothing of what was about to happen. I thought then the trascendental decision was crucial for their future and their freedom, as my wife had told me a long time ago when I could not tell her anything about what was coming.

I got into the car and ordered the driver to go to the Communications Center where the Command post of the Commander-in-Chief was. I arrived there at 7.40 a.m. When I entered the parking lot, General Oscar Bonilla, who was very worried by my delay, came out to meet me. I told him why, and held a meeting with the staff who had come with me and with other officers of the High Command and told them what was happening. I could verify with pleasure all were happy with the decision adopted, with the exception of my adjutant who told me "he did not agree with what was going to be carried out". I accepted his point of view, but took him out from the car and ordered at once his detention in a room of the building.

After a quick review and a short wait we heard the national anthem played in all the revolutionary radios of Santiago, and little after 8.30 we listened to the proclamation of the Government of Junta. That declaration set out the grave moral, social, political and economic crisis in which the country had sunk as a result of the incapacity or the will of the Government. It also pointed out the development of terrorism which was leading Chile to a civil war, and, lastly, it announced the decision that the President should hand over his post to the Junta.

A State of Siege was decreed and the population was asked to remain in their houses until this was lifted.

The proclamation was a terrible blow for Allende. He talked on the telephone with Admiral Carvajal who told him he had orders from the Junta of Commanders-in-Chief to inform him that he must hand in his post without

preconditions, and that an Air Force plane was waiting to take him and his family to any Latin American country south of Panama. The rest of the people in La Moneda should surrender at once. The call was cut.

I have asked Allende's Army aide-de-camp what happened in La Moneda Palace that day. He provided the following narrative:

"On that day I had to present myself in the house of the President in Tomás Moro at 8.30 a.m., where I was to meet the driver, corporal Luis Quintanilla Márquez.

About 8.00 a.m. I received a telephone call from Corporal Quintanilla in which he told me he was in La Moneda waiting for transport and informed me that the President was in the Palace. This fact had not been communicated to the undersigned by the Palace Guard or by anybody connected with the President, an abnormal thing because every time that something like that happened it was communicated to the aide-de-camp on duty. Corporal Quintanilla added that something abnormal was happening, because La Moneda was surrounded by armoured police vehicles and there was great movement inside the building".

"In view of this information I decided to go to La Moneda immediately where I arrived at 8.30, noticing very heavy traffic and hearing the President make a speech on the radio to say that the situation was abnormal".

"On arriving to La Moneda, I took up my post immediately together with the personnel on duty, and started to inquire details of what was happening, because inside I could witness great nervousness among the Government officials and the President was again talking through a radio that had not yet been silenced".

"At this same moment we listened to Edict N° 1 of the Junta of Commanders-in-Chief and General Director of the Police Corps. After the authenticity of the communique was verified, I had a clear picture of the situation in which we were living at that moment. I looked at the time, it was 9.15".

"I at once contacted the Air Force and Naval aides-de-camp by telephone (the former was in Tomás Moro and the second in his apartment at 120 Bulnes Street). They arrived about 9.30 and I suggested that we have a meeting with the President to tell him what was actually happening and to find out what would be his attitude".

"The President gave us an audience at once, which took place in the private salon of his office. There was a small incident between the President and his personal bodyguard (GAP) because they remained watchful preventing the privacy of the audience; twice the President had to intervene violently, and was even obliged to close the door to avoid the unwanted vigilance of the security personnel".

"The Air Force aide-de-camp started the conversation. He told the President that any kind of resistance was useless, adding that the Air Force had a plane ready for him to leave the country, and that he would personally take him according the instructions of General Leigh. I spoke next as Army aide in La Moneda and stated the need to avoid any resistance because the Armed Forces and the Police Corps would act in coordination if he did not yield, and any sacrifice would be useless given the very serious situation we were living. The Naval aide also made him see the futility of any resistance. After listening to us, Allende addressed us saying he would surrender on no account whatsoever, but that he might talk with the Commanders-in-Chief if favourable conditions were established, a message he willingly entrusted to his aides; but he had already taken a decision and that was that he would not surrender and showing a machine gun of a special model he had in his hand he said more or less the following words: "I will defend myself to the end with this gun, reserving the last shot for me and I will aim here", pointing simultaneously at his palate".

He then gave an imperative order to his three aides to return at once to their institutions. He ratified this minutes later when leaving his private office, communicating it aloud to the Government officials who were in the aides' office, with approximately these words: "I have irrevocably ordered my aides to return to their institutions, order they will carry out immediately obeying my decision".

"When I came out of Allende's private office I went to my office where I took a phone call from my house confirming an imminent ground attack and advising that the air strike would start at 11 a.m. It was then about 10 a.m. My wife, who gave me that information, and the rest of the family were obviously very shocked".

"From that moment and in conformity with the instructions of the President the post was abandoned, and the undersigned went to the Military House where he met all the personnel, excepting those who were off duty (due to illness or leave). The situation was explained to them and they were informed of the resolution of the undersigned who listened to any doubts they had. Everybody declared that they would follow him wherever he ordered. It was then 10.15 a.m.".

"I then went to the Ministry of Defense and afterwards to the High Command post. I contacted at once the delegate of the Commander-in-Chief in that place, General Ernesto Baeza, and informed him of the situation in La Moneda and of what had been done there. At the same time I directed from that post the evacuation of the personnel which arrived normally to that building about 10.45 a.m., and proceeded to introduce them to the authorities of the High Command. I left them in the Ministry of Defense according to the orders received. I received news that the

absentees were accounted for, as all those who were missing turned up, and those who for service reasons had not attended to the meeting I had called in that opportunity, had mistakenly gone to their houses".

These were the events witnessed by the Military aide de camp. In the meantime the fighting in the streets of Santiago grew more intense, and the noise of light weapons increased in the center of the city. We soon received information that the units quartered in the external area of the city were advancing towards the center. The much vaunted industrial cordons with which they had threatened us had not reacted, nor was anyone found in those places located as operational stations. The guerrilla heroes had either fled, taken refuge in their houses or had asked asylum in some embassies. Those which for three years had sown and nurtured hatred, pushing the country towards a confrontation, had run away when this had occurred and would continue doing so like rats abandoning a sinking ship.

CHAPTER VI
The Battle of Santiago

Let us go back to the night of September the 10th to the 11th 1973, when the preparation of troops began at dawn under the cover of the inevitable quartering to prevent greater ills. The Minister of Defense himself had learnt about it when, on the morning of September 10th, I informed him of the state of unrest provoked by Altamirano. That night arms were prepared and ammunition distributed for the battle of the following day.

All the information gathered by the Intelligence Service and the one we had obtained through the subaltern commands indicated that the job would be long, bloody and very tough, because the paramilitary elements placed in the industries in the outskirts of the city and the cordons in the centre of Santiago would act especially in the housing estates and within the city with the likelihood of causing a great number of casualties both military and civilian.

The afternoon of September 10th the General Headquarters of the groups worked intensely and in utmost secrecy to carry out the orders to the respective combat units which would take part. These instructions were ready for distribution in the evening of that day.

Work continued until after midnight in the tactical and combat units. Without detracting from the intense effort displayed by the Staff Officers, I consider it convenient to refer in particular to the situation of the Armoured Regiment, none of whose officers and non-commissioned officers, after the painful experience of June, wanted to relive the unpleasant hours

passed after the "Tanquetazo"; the judicial proceedings were still in progress and its former commander was under arrest in the Infantry School in San Bernardo and other officers in different places.

When General Palacios went to that unit and mentioned the reason of his visit, the officers and the troop were disconcerted. But I had foreseen this reaction when I had sent my Adjutant and my Orderly Officer, both of the armoured branch, to that regiment. Now it was their turn to act. I had sent them with the secret mission to take control of the situation which would occur. And, indeed, it was the timely and resolute intervention of these two Captains before their subordinates which cast all doubts aside. The whole unit, with great decision, joined the operation.

The units were ready for the action at 6.30. The communique I had drafted to be sent to all the units in Chile was being already transmitted in cypher from 6.00 a.m.

Before 8.30 the General Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief was installed and working. At that time we could listen through all the loyal radio to our National Anthem and the reading of the proclamation in which we informed the country that we were putting an end to the Marxist regime which for three years had tried to destroy the Republic and implant Communism. Together with that we gave instructions to alert the people.

Before the crucial action, from the early hours of the morning there were some isolated incidents as a result of the raids carried out according to the Arms Control Law, as was foreseen in the combat plans. These skirmishes were increasing in number and becoming more intense towards the center of the city.

Allende tried to gain time from the beginning convinced that his paramilitary forces would support him with all their strength. But nothing happened; their leaders, who had incited the workers during these three years, were the first to hide, flee or take refuge in some embassy. Moreover, the people had already realised how Allende had betrayed Chile as head of the Government, and in this moment the threat to the fatherland was more important than the falsehoods and hallucinations of Marxism. For these reasons Allende began losing strength with the only exception of a group of fanatics who blindly accepted a hopeless fight.

The "Operation Silence" of the broadcasting system had been carried out quickly, in conformity to the changes introduced in the "Hercules". Executive Plan of Internal Security on September 4th 1973. The only radio on the air was Radio Magallanes which was silenced about 10.40.

After keeping a permanent radio-telephonic link between the Command post of Admiral Carvajal and my Post about the displacing and action of the troops, we received through a radio phone the information that Allende had committed suicide. It was a little after 10.30. When I asked Carvajal about this news, he replied:

"Augusto, the news of the suicide is false, I have just talked with the Naval aide-de-camp, Commander Grez, and he tells me that he and the other two aides are leaving La Moneda and are coming to the Ministry of Defense".

I asked Admiral Carvajal to bring the Head of the Police Corps to ask him to withdraw his troops from the Government Palace because La Moneda would shortly be bombed by the Air Force. He replied that the policemen were already leaving La Moneda and that General Brady was told not to shoot at them when they left.

I immediately received a fresh call from Carvajal in which he told me that Secretary of the Navy Domínguez had called him to transmit a request from Allende that the three Commanders-in-Chief should go to La Moneda to ask him his surrender. I replied: "You know the gentleman is not reliable; consequently if he wants to surrender tell him to come to the Ministry of Defense to give himself up to the Commanders-in-Chief". Carvajal's answer was: "I talked personally with him. I intimated his surrender on behalf of the three Commanders-in-Chief and he replied with a stream of obscenities". I ordered the military and police personnel to evacuate La Moneda before it was attacked by Air Force planes, to be followed by its assault and occupation. The air strike would make the ground assault easier and with less losses of human lives.

A few minutes later I was informed that Police Corps General Cesar Mendoza had assumed command of his institution and that General Yovane commanded the policemen surrounding La Moneda. I also received confirmation that there were no military or police personnel inside, which left us free to start the attack if Allende and his GAP did not surrender.

It suddenly occurred to me that Allende might have fled in a Police armoured vehicle. I asked if that was possible, to which Carvajal answered in the negative, because the vehicles had retired from that place long before he had talked with Allende by telephone, and later he had talked with the Naval aide who had confirmed that Allende was still in La Moneda.

Shortly afterwards the Air Force Commander asked leave to raid the headquarters of Radio Magallanes which continued broadcasting. I was informed that General Leigh wanted to make contact through the radio with me, but we were unable to communicate due to the static. I therefore renewed contact with Admiral Carvajal who informed me General Mendoza was in contact with him and with General Brady and that the action of the ground forces was well coordinated.

With these antecedents I asked Admiral Carvajal to transmit the order to bomb La Moneda at 10.50 a.m. Accordingly, the troops must fall back two blocks at that time. The order was: "The bombing will start at 11.00 hours sharp, the troops will take cover in the buildings to allow the action of the planes without suffering harm".

With this in mind we informed General Leigh not to start the bombing without knowing exactly the ground situation. General Brady was also notified of all this.

We were in these activities when we received information that the Socialist brigades were preparing to attack the Ministry of Defense. I also heard some shots outside the Command Post.

Before going out to see what was happening I ordered Admiral Carvajal an General Baeza to alert the people at the Ministry, because there was a plan for that eventuality: every official, armed with automatic weapons, and selected sharpshooters suitably placed, should knock out the snipers who were shooting from the building across the street. They answered that the aforesaid plan was already in execution, and that intense fire had been exchanged.

I left the Command Post and met the Commander of Parachutists and Special Forces who informed me that a group of men had tried to attack the area where the Post was. I ordered an immediate search so that nobody should escape. I then returned to the radio station where I was informed that La Moneda was being attacked by tanks by the Infantry School, the Non-Commissioned Officers School and the artillery of the Tacna Regiment. The attack reached its greatest intensity at that moment. The artillery fire caused great damage to the old building.

I asked Admiral Carvajal to give Allende a final chance of surrender, provided he handed in his resignation before a deadline of 10.30 a.m. We guaranteed him his physical integrity and that he would be banished. I emphasized that it was the last chance. We would wait until 10.50 to receive his resignation. If he did not resign we would attack whatever the consequences.

At that moment I remembered about Messrs Altamirano, Vergara, Suárez, Corvalán, Flores and others. I enquired of their whereabouts but nobody had news of them. I therefore requested Carvajal that the Intelligence Services of the three institutions should look for them and arrest them, because they were among the chief responsible for the destruction of the country. Carvajal called me to tell me Commander Badiola was in contact with La Moneda and that he had reported that Allende intended to parley. I angrily rejected the idea: dialogue meant that each side would yield something. I repeated to the Admiral "The surrender must be unconditional, no parley. Unconditional surrender and he will be arrested; only his life and physical integrity will be respected, and then he will be sent to another country".

In the General Headquarters I told the Head of Operations to take down the following: "The State of Siege with curfew is decreed from this moment. Martial Law will be applied to every person who is caught with

arms or explosives in his power". That message was sent at once to Admiral Carvajal for its circulation and execution.

Admiral Carvajal informed me that a special messenger was coming in at that moment to talk to us, to which I replied: "This gentleman (Allende) is trying to gain time. We are showing naivete; do not accept any parley, because a dialogue means time for him. No, a thousand times no; it must be unconditional surrender. Listen clearly to what I say. Unconditional surrender. If he wishes, he may come accompanied by somebody to the Ministry of Defense to surrender and to present his resignation. If he does not, we will start the bombing at 11.00".

Carvajal replied that he agreed and that he would give ten minutes time to evacuate La Moneda, after which time the bombing by air would start. They had to surrender unconditionally or suffer the consequences.

"That group of gentlemen there, Tohá, Almeyda and all those Marxists who have destroyed the country must be detained". Carvajal told me: "José Tohá asks you to wait a moment to convince the President to surrender". To this I answered categorically: "No, Admiral. We are fighting for the fate of Chile. If we show weakness and start offering terms and accepting parleys it would be the most unfortunate thing that could happen. Only what we have offered: the plane is ready and he may go anywhere except to Argentina".

Carvajal was asked for a means of transport to evacuate some ladies who were in La Moneda, which I accepted ordering a jeep from the Ministry of Defense to go there to fetch six ladies and asking to hold the attack for about five minutes.

A few minutes later I was informed that the women had left La Moneda. Consequently we could start the attack. It was necessary to put an end to the agony as there was no surrender from the people inside the building. Orders were given to stop the attack before the bombing of the Air Force, but I was informed that the air attack would be delayed about 15 minutes and would be carried out simultaneously over La Moneda and the house of Tomás Moro. It was explained that the delay was caused by a fuel problem as the planes were coming from Concepción. Given this new delay I ordered the troops: "If there is no air strike within 15 minutes we are going to attack with all the artillery, with the recoiless guns, mortars, rockets, artillery and the point 50 machine guns of the tanks".

The tank artillery started a violent attack. The first grenades were effective. The infantry prepared for the final assault. But it was necessary to order a new halt and retreat because we received information that the Hawker Hunter planes would be bombing La Moneda in seven minutes. The attack was stopped. There was heavy fire from the buildings of the Ministry of Public Works and the State Bank which it was necessary to wipe out. For this I ordered an operation of parachutists an Special Forces men.

Again the Admiral informed me that Undersecretaries Vergara an Puccio were with him and that they had brought a series of conditions from Allende which he considered unacceptable. The advisers warned me it was not wise to allow him to leave the country because he would discredit the new Government in every country, Socialist or not. They considered that it was best that he should remain in Chile.

I answered them that what we had offered should be carried out regardless. I was informed that numerous officials of the Popular Unity had reached the Command Post of Admiral Carvajal. They were arrested as soon as they came. This way we arrested Vergara, Flores and others. Secretary Puccio was authorised to leave the country should Allende do so.

With satisfaction I heard the news that Army Puma helicopters were opening fire over the roofs of the Ministry of Public Works and the State Bank. The extremists disappeared at once. I gave the order to issue a warning that any sniper who was caught on the roofs of the buildings surrounding La Moneda would be attacked by helicopter fire.

My great concern from the first hours of the morning had been the reaction which could take place in the Calama and Antofagasta areas. At this time General Bonilla who was acting as my Chief of Staff informed me that my orders had been carried out throughout the country and any local reactions were due to paramilitary groups and most of these had been put down.

My doubts remained and I did not dismiss the possibility that groups of workers in Calama should organize themselves as paramilitary forces. In effect, they had reorganized in small groups to flee to the interior. This put my mind at ease, as it discarded the beginning of a civil war from that zone. I ordered that people fleeing should be found and arrested.

Other problems, less serious, took place in Talca and Valdivia but they did not represent a serious threat in that moment. The possibility of a civil war, which had been my greatest concern was disappearing. As I have already pointed it out the reason for my concern was that if the Marxists took control of some area of the territory it could serve them as a rallying place for their comrades coming from different parts of the country. Calama could have been a suitable place because it has a landing field where it would have been easy to receive planes bringing war material and supplies from outside and that would be very serious for us.

Minutes later, a new report informed me that "helicopters were opening fire on the rooftops of the Ministry of Public Works, and that people were still coming out from the Presidential Palace through the door on Morandé 80, with their hands up". I ordered that "the exit of these persons should be carefully checked". I was also informed that General Leigh said that the Air Force was landing a helicopter in the sport grounds of the Military

Academy to take Allende alone or with his family to an airport, provided he had previously signed his resignation.

There existed the danger that Allende was waiting for darkness so as to effect some maneuver which would allow him to escape. We should wait for his decision until four o'clock to which I agreed.

The joint resolution of the Commanders-in-Chief and the General Director of the Police Corps stated that we would all meet after 18.00 hours. For this reason we informed Admiral José Toribio Merino who was in Valparaíso.

Again the shooting became very intense for a few minutes. There was heavy fire from the helicopters and the infantry. Then the fire was halted while waiting for the exit of Allende. General Leigh informed us he had already sent a helicopter to the Military Academy to wait for Allende. The helicopter would wait until 5.00 p.m. and then would return to its base.

We heard the loud shrieking noise of the Hawker Hunter jets, and the crack and smoke from the explosions. The attack had taken place and La Moneda was on fire.

We received news that the Air Force helicopters had opened fire over Tomás Moro and that La Moneda had received the impact of the rockets of the planes, which doubtless would hasten the end. However, the fire of light weapons and tanks continued.

I was informed that a prominent political figure had been calling me at the General Headquarters of the Second Division. He wished to talk with me and as he had not found me he had left the following message:

"XX speaking. Tell General Pinochet that if he needs me I am at such a number".

An hour later the same person repeated the call:

"XX speaking. Let General Pinochet know I will be in another place. If he needs me he may call me to this number".

When I was informed I merely told the Commander to thank the call and ask him to stop offering his services as they were not needed. Apparently this gentleman believed that we were going to offer the Government to him, as I was able to confirm later from his attitude.

Time passed quickly. the morning fog had started to fall taking on a dark gray shade. The halt of the fire had been kept to give the opportunity to those resisting in La Moneda to surrender. Mr Flores arrived to the command post in the Ministry of Defense to ask for "decorous conditions to hand over the members of the Popular Unity Government". The answer was categorical: "We will only respect their lives, all the rest is unconditional".

The Commander-in-Chief of the Military Institutes informed us that our troops had been attacked with machine gun fire from the Cuban Embassy. I ordered that the Ambassador be informed on the telephone that

if they repeated this action they should face the consequences, such as the assault and destruction of his residence, even though we later had international problems. Also that they had a plane at their disposal to leave the country, because we would break relations with that country immediately.

There was an urgent communication from General Palacios, in command of the Infantry School forces, reporting that they were already inside the Palace. Admiral Carvajal informed me that Allende had committed suicide. Now it was urgent to decide what to do with his remains. I pointed out to Admiral Carvajal that the head doctors of the Health Departments of the three institutions and of the Police Corps and also the coroner of Santiago should examine the body as soon as possible and certify the cause of his death, so as to avoid a possible accusation later on that the Armed Forces were responsible for his murder. It was urgent that this be done as soon as possible. I added to the Admiral: "You must report this to the respective institutions. Further you must draft a document which explains the exact way in which he was found".

I arranged for a meeting of the Commanders-in-Chief and the General Director of the Police Corps to take place in the Military Academy at 18.30.

The report of Brigadier General Palacios about his entry to La Moneda is as follows:

"After the bombing of the Hawker Hunter planes, we gave the order for the tanks on the south side of the armoured unit surrounding La Moneda to open fire. Once the fire of the heavy weapons was over I ordered the advance of the infantry an other troops under my command in a pincer operation to enter and take the palace. I managed to get into the palace at the head of these forces through the door on 80 Morandé street about 2.00 o'clock in the afternoon. The hardest part of the operation was the fire of the snipers shooting against us from the nearby buildings.

"On entering through 80 Morandé street we could see a white flag on small pole which we later learnt was the smock of a doctor which "Payita" herself had displayed by order of the President. At that moment about 30 civilians, all of them members of the personal guard and many doctors who had surrendered to our troops, were coming out the building. The second floor of La Moneda was in ruins due to the effects of the fire. As we arrived we were unexpectedly received with shots from snipers ambushed in some office".

"My deepest and strongest impression was to witness the fire and destruction of the Red Salon and the Presidential Office, from which we were only able to rescue the replica of O'Higgins' sword. It was at that moment that I received a shot ricochetted from the ambushed snipers of the personal guard. An officer of the Tacna Regiment interposed himself

between the shooter and me, and even though he was wounded, miraculously saved my life".

"We continued our advance into the interior of the palace, when we opened the door which gives into the Independence Hall (the President's private hall) we found Allende dead as a result of two shots which he himself had fired by putting the machine gun, a present given to him by Fidel Castro, under his chin. It caused his instant death. When we entered that room we found a young man who said he was Dr. Guijón in charge of the medical services of the Presidency. He had heard the shots of Allende in the moments he was leaving the hall. He returned, and could certify that after he had ordered them to leave La Moneda, he had stayed behind to commit suicide in the aforementioned way".

"I must confess I did not recognise Allende as he was poorly dressed and by the characteristics of the suicide that practically split his head in two pieces. His hands were covered with gunpowder, as a result of personally firing weapons against the troops from the windows of La Moneda".

"Next to him there was a gas mask and a helmet that, according to Dr Guijón, he had been wearing the whole time. I immediately put a guard in that room to prevent the entry of any person – military or civilian – until the doctors you had called for, the experts of the civilian police and the specialists of the Military Intelligence service, should arrive".

"As soon as this was done, and having called the Fire Company to come urgently, I ordered the recollection of all the arms and combat elements that we found in large quantities, and which the people could appreciate as they were immediately photographed on the spot by various journalists. For obvious reasons, however, I did not allow photographs of the body of Allende, with the exception of the aforementioned police experts. Later, once the corresponding analysis had been carried out, we had his body sent to the Military Hospital where a post mortem and a detailed study was carried out by the four heads of the Health Services of the Armed Forces and the Police Corps. While I was waiting for the arrival of the doctors the body was covered – for want of something more suitable – with a poncho, we found in that room. At the same time I sent by radio the following message to the General Headquarters of the Command: "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, LA MONEDA TAKEN, PRESIDENT FOUND DEAD".

The remains of Allende were taken from La Moneda, which was still burning, and transferred to the Military Hospital for his post mortem.

In the meantime the battle of Santiago became more intense and the troops received heavy fire from the buildings opposite the Palace. This situation incited the troops who answered the fire without hesitation. There were clashes with the paramilitary groups and with the MIR guerrillas in different parts of the city which our troops answered effectively. Later we

started a tough cleaning operation. However, in those moments the industrial cordons did not react as they had threatened us.

While the battle of Santiago was taking place, in Valparaíso and Talcahuano the Navy, the Army, the Air Force and the Police Corps proceeded to occupy the offices of the Provincial and Departamental Governments and to detain the groups of extremists who were still fighting or had surrendered.

The activity of the forces in Valparaíso under the command of Vice Admiral José Toribio Merino Castro allowed for the quick occupation of the city and the control of the extremists who attempted some resistance.

I remember the emotion I felt in those moments when the liberation of Chile had been completed, just as our consciences were freed from the thoughts which oppressed us. Everything was over. With a lump in my throat I could only say: Viva Chile! Our country is saved.

Graduation of Military Nurses, 1970.

With Ecuador's Military Aide-de-Camp, 1970

As General Commander of the Santiago Garrison presenting honors to President Allende on May 21st, 1971.

Commander of the Santiago Garrison.

In the General Command of the Santiago Garrison.

At an annual meeting of the U.S. Army in a Panamá Canal Fort, 1972.

The author bends protocol so as to avoid presenting honors to Fidel Castro.

He hands over the Command of the Santiago Garrison, 1972.

Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

The author assumes the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Army